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Youth Leadership and Group Effectiveness
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4-H Club Bulletin
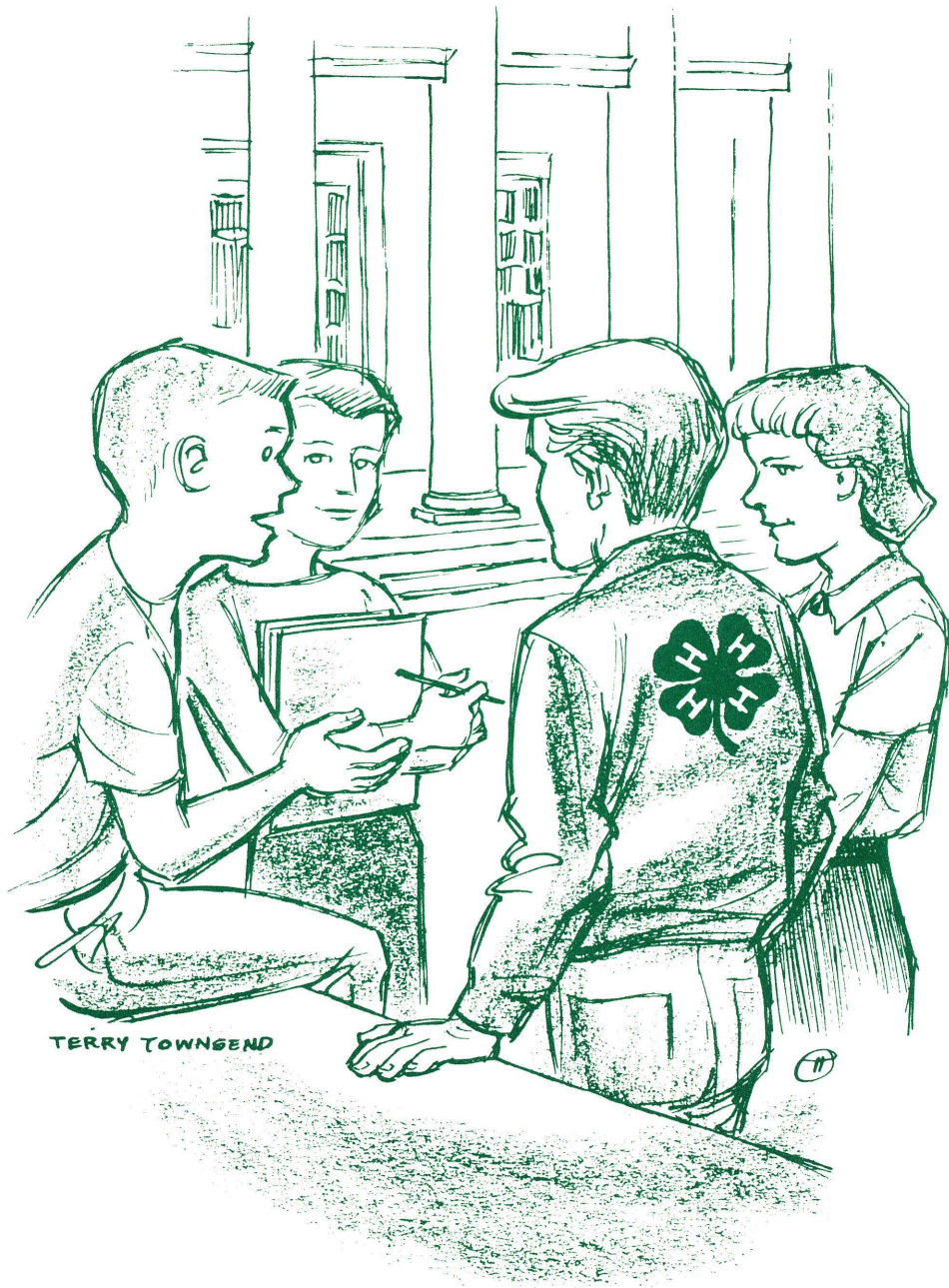Dr. Warren H. Schmidt, Dr. Gordon L. Lippitt, Edith Whitfield, Terry Townsend
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YOUTH LEADERSHIP
and
GROUP EFFECTIVENESS

TERRY TOWNSEND

About this Monograph on
YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND GROUP EFFECTIVENESS . . .

As more older 4-H members become interested in leadership it is important that the most up-to-date material and methods be available to assist them. Toward this end the committee planning the 1961 4-H Club Congress delegates program requested that a special session be held with the State Leadership Award winners. These delegates in turn would work with all the 4-H delegates attending the Congress.

To successfully carry out this program it was necessary to bring together under one cover numerous ideas usable by the 4-H member working on leadership. **Leadership Resources, Inc.** was contacted to prepare the training outline and materials. This monograph may be purchased for use by 4-H groups and their adult volunteer 4-H leaders from Leadership Resources, Inc., 1025 Connecticut Avenue, Washington 6, D. C.

Knowledge of good leadership practice has been growing rapidly. This Monograph is an adaptation for young people and the leaders of young people of parts of three other Monographs published by Leadership Resources, Inc. in its "Looking Into Leadership Series":

The Leader Looks At The Leadership Dilemma, by Dr. Warren H. Schmidt;

The Leader Looks At Group Effectiveness, by Dr. Gordon L. Lippitt and Edith Whitfield; and

The Leader Looks At Self-Development, by Dr. Malcolm S. Knowles.

Illustrator of this Monograph is Terry Townsend.

The first printing of this Monograph was made especially for the National 4-H Service Committee, Inc. for distribution at a special meeting in Chicago in November, 1961. Leadership Resources, Inc. reserves and retains full and exclusive rights of additional reproduction, publication, and distribution.

A LEADER OFTEN WANTS TO KNOW . . .

How can I get members to participate more fully in my group?

What makes an effective group?

How can I keep group discussion on the track?

What causes cliques to form—and how can they be handled?

How can a leader be flexible enough to meet changing situations and still give consistent leadership to a group?

Can I really learn to be a good leader?

When is *group* decision-making more practical than *individual* decision-making?

SOCIAL SCIENCE AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE TELL US . . .

About Leadership—

1. That leaders are *made,* not *born.*

Until modern times leaders came primarily from the aristocracy. The notion was widely held that some people were born to be leaders and others to be followers. With the rise of democracy, people from outside the aristocracy began to assume positions of leadership, but the notion persisted that they must have certain inherited personality traits setting them off from the followers. A number of studies in the first half of this century sought to identify the essential traits of leaders but they failed to find any consistent pattern.

Now social scientists generally agree that while personality characteristics certainly influence the acceptability and effectiveness of leaders in particular situations, there is no single leadership *type* of personality. A person can *learn* the things that are most important in successful leadership.

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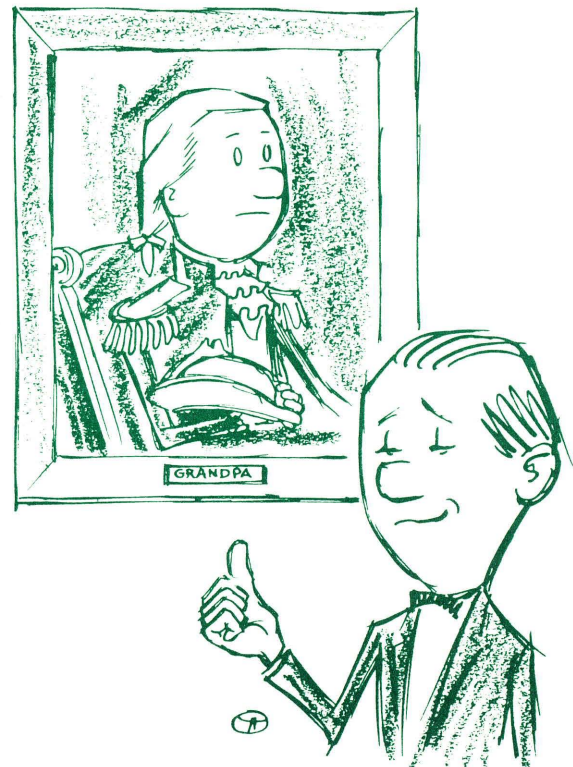
About Groups—

1. Successful group productivity depends on the ability of the members to exchange ideas freely and clearly and to feel involved in the decisions and the processes of the group.

2. A collection of capable individuals does *not* always produce a capable group. Mature persons often form an immature working group. When people get together, they as-

sume a character and existence all their own, growing into a mature working group or becoming infantile in their handling of problems. A number of investigators are now studying this area of group pathology, identifying reasons why some groups fail to be creative and productive.

3. Groups may be helped to grow to maturity; they need not develop like Topsy. By using appropriate procedures, groups can become more productive, channel energies into effective work, and eliminate or replace internal conflicts that block group progress.

4. The ability of a group to function properly is not necessarily dependent upon the leader. No group can become fully productive until its members are willing to assume responsibility for the way the group acts. Any group can benefit from a skilled leader, but to get creative group thinking, group decisions, and group action, research evidence indicates that many different roles are required. The effective leader must realize (and help the members to realize) that contributing to the total task of leadership is a responsibility of each member.

While many aspects of group life continue to provide material for research, studies have already produced an impressive array of principles for understanding and increasing group effectiveness.

SOME USEFUL GUIDELINES . . .

An Effective Group . . .

1. Has a clear understanding of its purposes and goals.

2. Is flexible in selecting its procedures as it works towards its goals.

3. Has achieved a high degree of communication and understanding among its members. Communication of personal feelings and attitudes, as well as ideas, occur in a direct and open fashion because they are considered important to the work of the group.

4. Is able to initiate and carry on effective decision-making, carefully considering minority viewpoints, and securing the commitment of all members to important decisions.

5. Achieves an appropriate balance between *group productivity* and the satisfaction of *individual needs*.

6. Provides for sharing of leadership responsibilities by group members—so that all members are concerned about contributing ideas, elaborating and clarifying the ideas of others, giving opinions, testing the feasibility of potential decisions, and in other ways helping the group to work on its task and maintain itself as an effective working unit.

7. Has a high degree of cohesiveness (attractiveness for the members) but not to the point of stifling individual freedom.

8. Makes intelligent use of the differing abilities of its members.

9. Is not dominated by its leader or by any of its members.

10. Can be objective about reviewing its own processes. It can face its problems and adjust to needed modifications in its operation.

11. Maintains a balance between emotional and rational behavior, channeling emotionality into productive group effort.

A LOOK AT BASIC CONCEPTS ABOUT GROUPS . . .

Most groups are working toward some goal. Even informal bull sessions have informal goals. A working group might be illustrated like this:

Our concern in this section is to look at the dynamics that are present as a group moves along the "path" toward its goal. Understanding these dynamics—these characteristic aspects of group life—will help us work more effectively in group settings.

Briefly, the behavior of any group can be analyzed in terms of its background, pattern of participation and communication, atmosphere and cohesion, sub-groupings, standards, procedures, goals, leader and member behavior. The following is an elaboration of these basic concepts, along with questions which might be asked about any group.
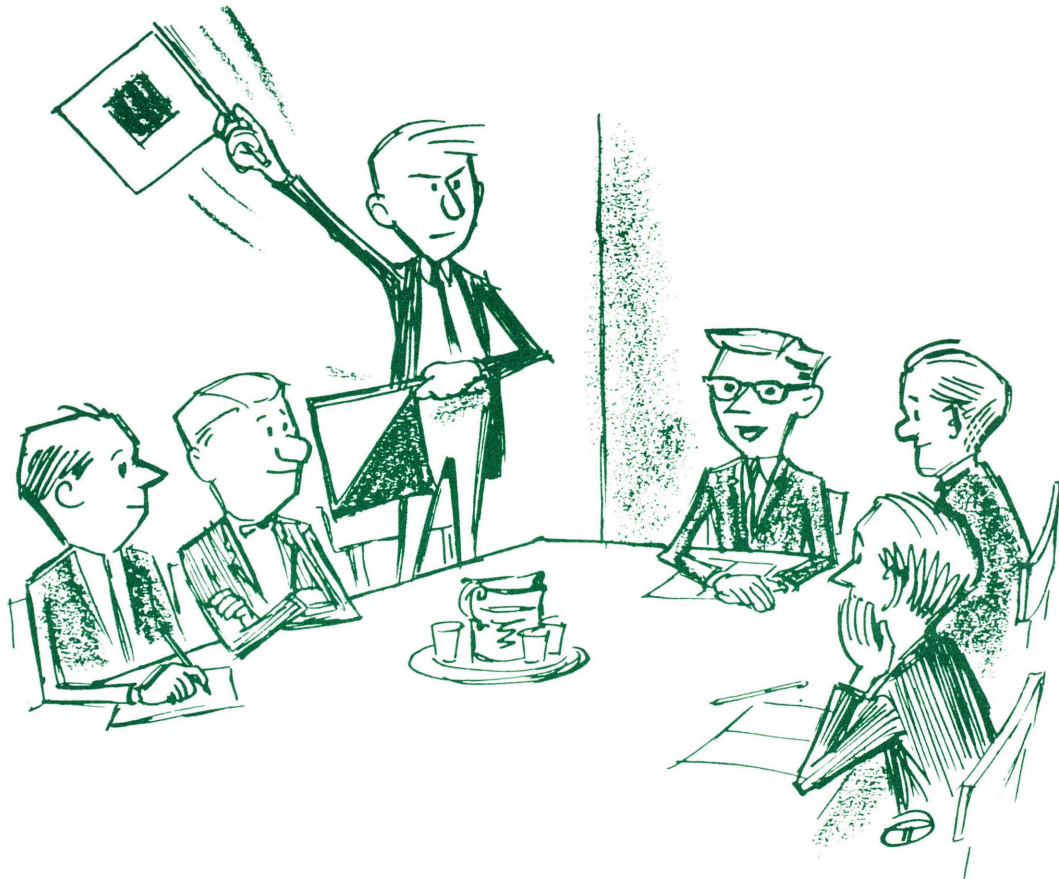
1. Group Background: Every group has a history, consisting of both its previous experiences and the personal notions and attitudes which the members bring to the group. These bear directly upon the life of the group. The responses and feelings of the group which have been generated in the past are also present—traditions, norms, goals, procedures, and activities which the group has developed.

● What is the history of the group?

● How does this history affect the relationships of the members?

● How does this history affect the work of the group?

2. Group Participation: In every group situation people are interacting with one another in many different ways. Participation can be described in terms of who is speaking to whom, and how much speaking is being done and by whom. Participation patterns tell something about the status and the power in the group, and often indicate how effectively the group is using the resources of its members. Participation for participation's sake is not the goal, but rather participation appropriate to the task, the resources of the individual, and the readiness of the group.

- Does the participation bring out what the various members might be able to contribute?

- Are particular factors affecting the participation—status people, unusually talkative members, awareness of outside pressures, etc.?

3. Group Communication: This is primarily what people say, how they say it, and what effect it has. However, much significant communication is *non*-verbal—in posture, facial expres-

sion, gesture, etc.—and our response is frequently to this *non*-verbal level of communication. In verbal communication, the clarity of expression, the honesty with which real feelings are expressed, and the ability to listen to others have an important influence on group effectiveness.

- How much experience and feeling are members willing to share with each other?

- How clearly do members express their ideas?

- How many are really *listening*?

- Does everyone understand what is being said?

- What non-verbal means of communication are being employed?

4. Group Cohesion: This relates to the atractiveness of the group to its members. A variety of factors are involved in the cohesiveness of a group. For example, the ways in which

members express likings for one another affect group cohesion. Fear of a common enemy or zeal for a common task can affect cohesiveness. Perhaps the most effective cohesiveness is that which enables members to work together in an *interdependent* way, where each member feels free to invest himself and to make his contribution toward the work of the group, while retaining his individuality.

- How well is the group working together, accepting and rejecting the contributions of individuals?

- How willing are the members to accept and act upon group decisions?

- Is the cohesiveness dependent on likes and dislikes of persons for each other, or is it based on a commitment to the common group goal?

5. Group Atmosphere: At any given time a group's atmosphere is somewhere between "defensive" and "accepting." In a *defensive* atmosphere members are unable to communicate freely, to disagree with other members, or to expose ideas and feelings which run counter to the direction in which the group is going. If the atmosphere is a controlling, punishing, rigid one, the group's behavior will tend to become conforming, dependent, or apathetic. But if the atmosphere is one of listening, understanding, trusting—in short, *accepting*—then the group will develop greater creativity, with more helping relations among the members.

- How free do members feel to express themselves and to share personal feelings?

- How well does the group give support to its individual members?

- How flexible is the group climate in adjusting to the needs of different tasks?

6. Sub-Groupings: Sub-groups (sometimes called "cliques") often develop in groups. Sometimes such sub-groups form on the basis of friendships, sometimes because of a common need or interest at a particular stage of the group life, or sometimes because of antipathy toward other members or opposition to the direction of the group. Sub-groups can change within the group in relation to new tasks, new forces or new members, and they can greatly influence the group's effectiveness.
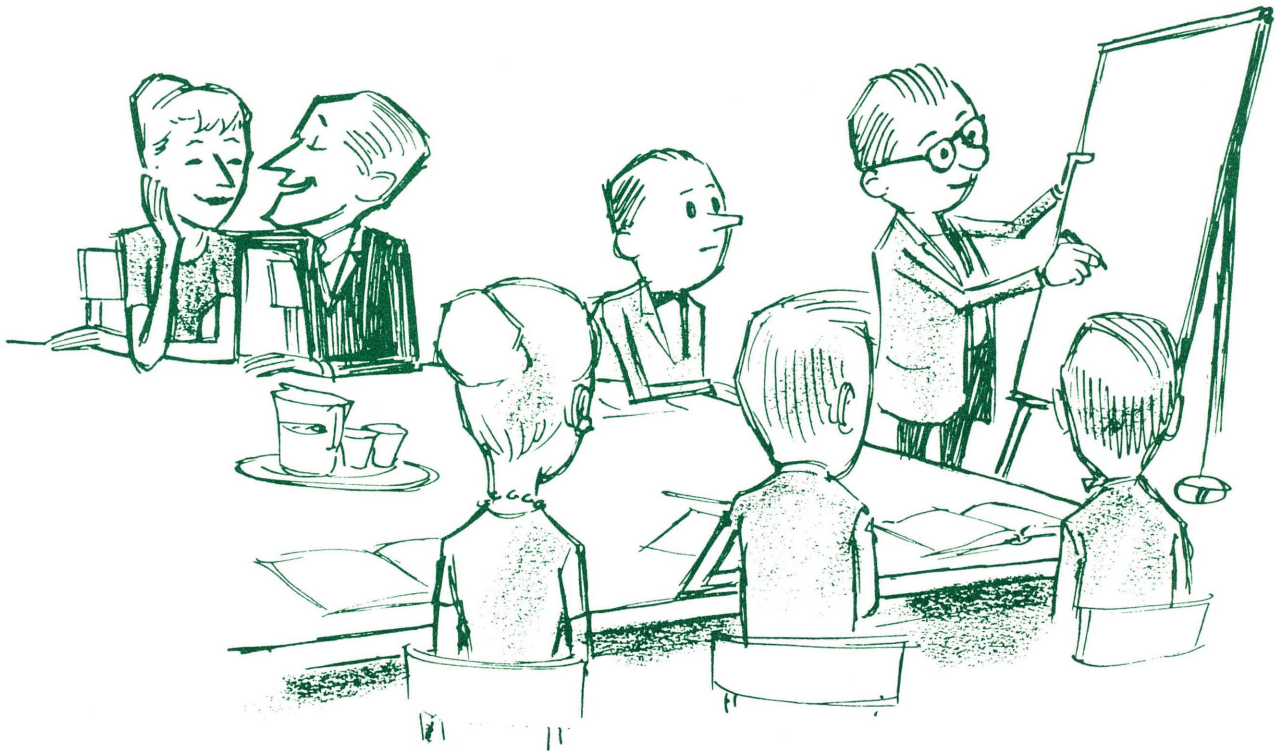
● What sub-groups exist, and how do they work with the total group?

● What are the needs, issues, or forces around which sub-groups appear to form?

7. Group Standards: These refer to the code of operation adopted by a group. These standards provide a framework or guide for adjusting individual needs and resources to the actions of the group. They help to stabilize the group and contribute to its cohesiveness. Some examples of standards might be: whether members speak out spontaneously, wait to
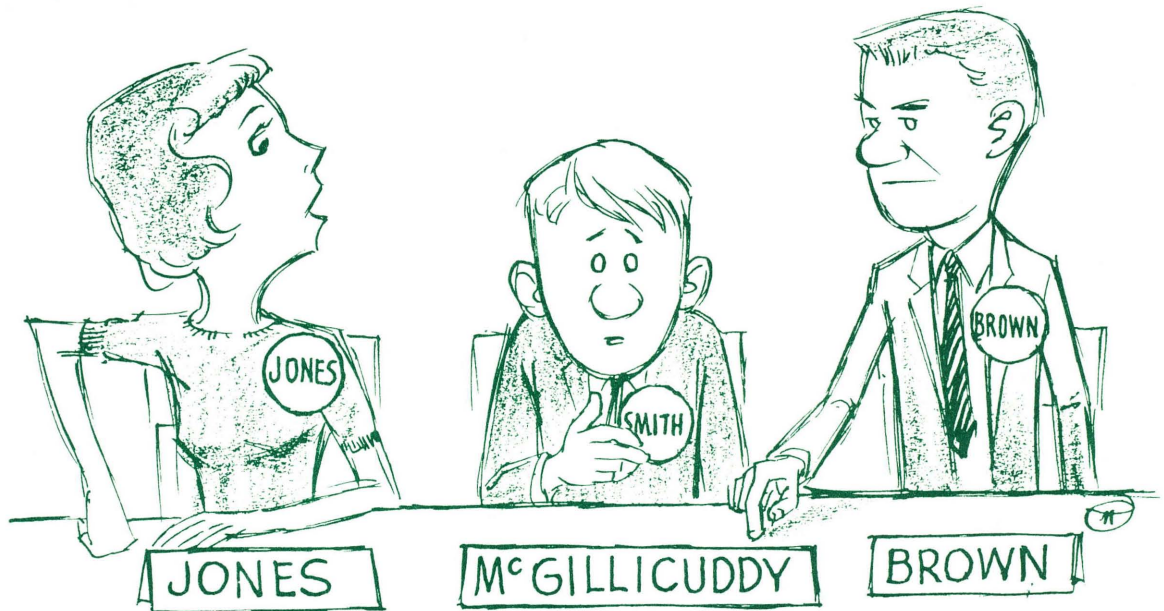
be called on, or wait for "their turn" to talk; whether they sit at the same place each meeting or change places, etc. Group standards can be either implicit or explicit, with most groups operating on certain implicit standards which are rarely stated openly.

- Has the group developed standards of behavior for its own operation?

- Are the standards that have been developed implicit or have they become explicit — and therefore open to re-examination?

- Does the group examine its standards so it can change those which need changing and keep those which are useful?

8. Group Procedures: All groups operate with a certain set of procedures—that is, defined ways of getting work done. If a group is to achieve maximum effectiveness, it must be able to vary its procedures so that they are appropriate to the task to be done. Some group procedures are: how an agenda is prepared and used; how votes are taken (by ballot or by hand); how discussion is controlled or guided, etc.

- What kind of procedures does the group use?

- How appropriate are the procedures for the size of the group?

- How appropriate are the procedures for accomplishing the group task?

- Are the procedures understood by all of the members of the group?

9. Group Goals: Goals can be immediate and short-range or long-range; they can vary in their clarity and in the value which the group places upon them; they can emerge from the group or be imposed on it; they can be realistic in relation to the resources of the group, or completely unrealistic. Effective groups must continually check the clarity and validity of their goals.

- How does the group choose its goals?

- Are the goals realistic and attainable, considering the resources of the group?

- Does the group relate its immediate task to long-range group objectives?

10. Group Leader and Member Behavior: Leader behavior in a group can range from almost complete control of the decision-making by the leader to almost complete control by the group, with the leader contributing his resources just like any other group member. A leader can assume most of the functions required to provide leadership for the group; or these functions can become the responsibility of the members as well.

- Are the necessary group leadership functions being distributed among the group's membership?

- Does the leader vary his behavior so that the members can assume appropriate responsibility for the decisions of the group?

Leadership Functions in the Group—

To be effective, every group must have two kinds of functions—or jobs—performed by someone—leader or member:

1. Task Functions: These leadership functions are to facilitate and coordinate group effort in the selection and definition of a common problem and in the solution of that problem.

● **Initiating:** Proposing tasks or goals; defining a group problem; suggesting a procedure or ideas for solving a problem.

● **Information or opinion seeking:** Requesting facts; seeking relevant information about a group concern; asking for suggestions or ideas.

● **Information or opinion giving:** Offering facts; providing relevant information about group concerns; stating a belief; giving suggestions or ideas.

● **Clarifying or elaborating:** Interpreting or reflecting ideas and suggestions; clearing up confusions; indicating alternative and issues before the group; giving examples.

● **Summarizing:** Pulling together related ideas; restating suggestions after group has discussed them; offering a decision or conclusion for the group to accept or reject.

● **Consensus testing:** Sending up "trial balloons" to see if group is nearing a conclusion; checking with the group to see how much agreement has been reached.

2. Maintenance Functions: Functions in this category describe leadership activity necessary to alter or maintain the way in which members of the group work together, developing loyalty to one another and to the group as a whole.

● **Encouraging:** Being friendly, warm and responsive to others and to their contributions; showing regard for others by giving them an opportunity for recognition.

● **Expressing group feelings:** Sensing feelings, moods, relationships within the group; sharing feelings with other members.

● **Harmonizing:** Attempting to reconcile disagreements; reducing tension by "pouring oil on troubled waters"; getting people to explore their differences.

● **Compromising:** When one's own idea or status is involved in a conflict, offering to compromise one's own position; admitting error; disciplining oneself to maintain group cohesion.

● **Gate-keeping:** Attempting to keep communication channels open; facilitating the participation of others; suggesting procedures for sharing the discussion of group problems.

● **Setting standards:** Expressing standards for the group to achieve; applying standards in evaluating group functioning and production.

BASIC CONCEPTS ABOUT GROUP LEADERSHIP

If group *members* can perform so many functions of leadership, what does the elected or appointed *leader* do?

Many a leader wonders about this. He wants to encourage member participation and responsibility—but he also wants to carry his particular responsibility as leader. A continuing question many leaders face is:
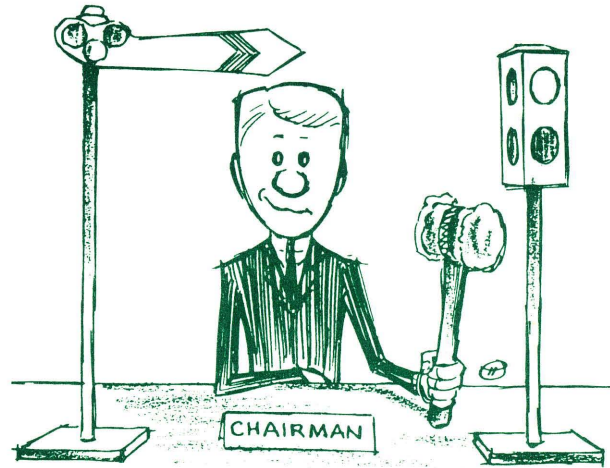
HOW DEMOCRATIC SHOULD A LEADER BE?

When you are the recognized leader of a group you have certain prerogatives and power. This is true whether you are the president of a youth organization, a leader, or the chairman of a committee. How you use this power will affect both the productivity of the group and the freedom of the subordinates or group members. As you, the leader, use *less* of your authority and power, the group members gain greater freedom in making decisions; as you use *more* of your power, the group's freedom declines. This relationship can be pictured as follows:

LEADER AUTHORITY

TELLS SELLS TESTS CONSULTS JOINS

GROUP FREEDOM

This diagram relates different kinds of leader behavior to different balances of power between leader and members. Behavior at the *left* of the scale might be called *"leader*-centered" because the decision depends largely on the *leader's* analysis of the problem, his interests, experience and motivations. Behavior on the *right* end of the scale might be called *"group*-centered" because the actions reflect the *group members'* assessment of the problem, their interests, experience and motivations.

Five Typical Patterns of Leadership Behavior

The experienced leader uses many complex and subtle means to exercise his influence and stimulate those he leads to creative and productive efforts. From the complex range of leader behavior, we have selected five of the most typical patterns, ranging from highly *leader*-centered to highly *group*-centered:

. . . **"Telling"** . . . The leader identifies a problem, considers alternative solutions, chooses one of them, and then tells his followers what they are to do. He may or may not consider what he believes the group members will think or feel about the decision, but they clearly do not participate directly in the decision-making. Coercion may or may not be used or implied.

. . . **"Selling"** . . . The leader as before, makes the decision without consulting his group. However, instead of simply announcing his decision, he tries to persuade the group members to accept it. He points out how he has considered organization goals and the interests of group members and he states how the members will benefit from carrying out the decision.

. . . **"Testing"** . . . The leader identifies a problem and proposes a tentative solution. Before finalizing it, however, he gets the reaction of those who will implement it. He says, in effect, "I'd like your frank reactions to this proposal, and I will then make the final decision."

. . . **"Consulting"** . . . The leader here gives the group members a chance to influence the decision from the beginning. He presents a problem and relevant background information, then asks the members for their ideas on how to solve it. In effect, the group is invited to increase the number of alternative actions to be considered. The leader then selects the solution he regards as most promising.

. . . **"Joining"** . . . The leader here participates in the discussion as "just another member"—and agrees in advance to carry out whatever decision the group makes. The only limits placed on the group are those given to the leader by his superiors. (Many research and development teams make decisions this way.)

What to Consider in Choosing Your Leadership Pattern

In deciding how to handle a particular issue or problem, the leader will want to consider many things—his own, and the group's, ability . . . the nature of the problem . . . the time available for making a decision . . . the expectations of the group, etc. If the group he leads is a continuing group, he will also keep in mind—
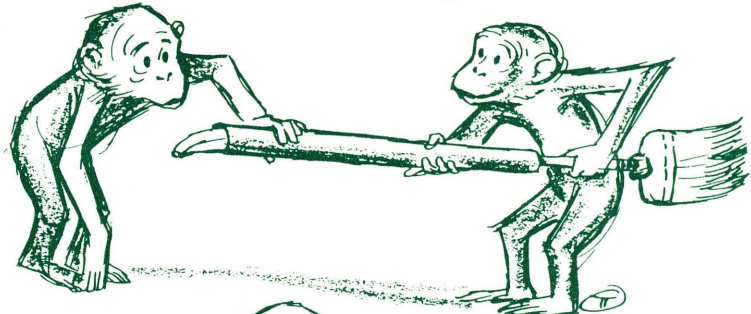
Long-Range Goals of Leadership:

1 Raising the level of member motivation.

2 Improving the quality of all decisions.

3 Developing teamwork and morale.

4 Furthering the individual development of members.

**5** Increasing the readiness to accept change.

BECOMING A BETTER LEADER...

Since there appears to be no single "right" style of leadership, the modern leader must be able to judge different situations accurately and be able to select from a wide range of leader actions. No one is born with these complex abilities—but most intelligent individuals can acquire them.

Learning about leadership usually consists of learning more about oneself. Like any self-improvement program, it is more likely to be successful if it is carefully planned.
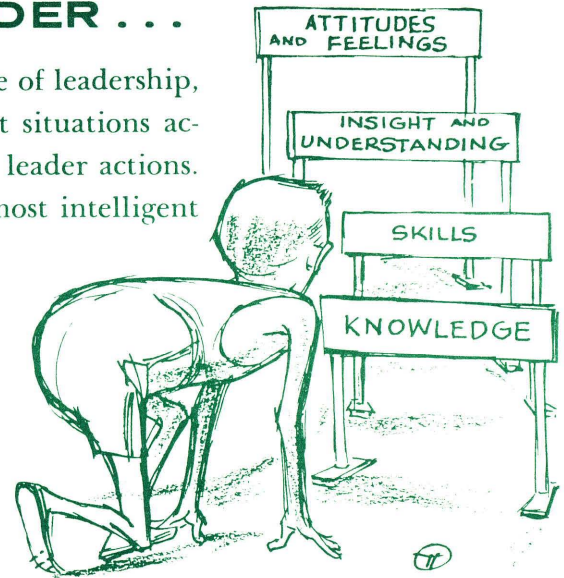
Planning Your Self-Development Program

1. Build as specially as you can a model of the kind of leader you want to become (The next section will help in this task.)

2. Identify the gaps between where you are now and where you want to be; what specific competencies you must develop in order to be the kind of leader you want to be:

Desired level Present level								
Competencies	ABILITY TO DEFINE TASKS	SENSITIVITY TO OTHERS	SKILL IN DIAGNOSIS OF GROUP PROBLEMS	TOLERANCE OF PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES	FLEXIBILITY	SKILL IN DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP	ETC.	ETC.

3. Identify the resources available to you for learning these competencies and then plan a strategy for making use of these resources:

Type of Learnings	Type of Resources
Knowledge	Readings; lectures; discussion with other leaders.
Insight and Understanding	Analysis of own experience; experimentation; feedback from group members.
Attitudes or Feelings	Trying out new attitudes in role playing; permissive discussion; counseling.
Skills	Workshops; case problem exercises; practice in real groups.

4. Evaluate each learning in order to measure your progress and replan your strategy.

The Self-Development Planning Sheet on the next page may help you to begin setting your objectives . . .

LOOKING FURTHER . . .

Leadership Pamphlet Series: *Understanding How Groups Work; How To Lead Discussions; How To Plan Programs* (743 North Wabash, Chicago: Adult Education Association of U.S.).

FRANK, LAWRENCE K., *How To Be A Modern Leader* (New York: Association Press, 1954).

GULLEY, HOLBERT: *Discussion, Conference and Group Processes* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960).

KNOWLES, MALCOLM S. and HULDA KNOWLES: *Introduction To Group Dynamics* (New York: Association Press, 1959).

ROBERTS, DOROTHY: *How To Work With Teen-Age Groups* (New York: Association Press).

TRECKER, HARLEIGH B. and A. R. TRECKER: *How To Work With Groups* (New York: Women's Press, 1952).

ZELKO, HAROLD: *Successful Conferences and Discussion Techniques* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1957).

NOTES

NOTES

NATIONAL 4-H
LEADERSHIP OBJECTIVES

1. Offer guidance to mature 4-H members and provide opportunities for these young people to acquire knowledge, skills and desirable attitudes needed by leaders and members of democratic groups.

2. Combine the enthusiasm and vigor of youth with the vision and experience of adult leaders in advancing the 4-H program.

3. Strengthen local clubs by bringing older 4-H members more actively into the planning and execution of the 4-H program.

As a means of helping to implement these objectives, a National 4-H Leadership Awards Program has been designed to encourage older 4-H members to assume leadership responsibilities and to give them recognition for outstanding accomplishment in this area. The program is conducted by the Cooperative Extension Service and arranged by the National 4-H Service Committee. Awards are provided by The Sears-Roebuck Foundation, Chicago, Illinois. For further information, contact your County Extension Agent.