

Virginia Bonasegale – Paolo Linati

DOING OUR BEST, ALWAYS

SCOUT/GUIDE LAW FOR ADULTS



Our kit

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“ The scout/guide Law is linked to a Promise, through which we join the big family of scouting and guiding.

A Promise which we renew year after year, endeavouring to relive it in our daily life.

For some of us the Promise was first taken long ago, and over the years our vision of the World has grown wider and wider.

Our individual lives are oriented toward reaching the deepest understanding of the scout/guide Law, which provides us with a perpetual rule for evaluating and living.

”

STRADE APERTE



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1. HONOUR IN BEING TRUSTWORTHY "A SCOUT/GUIDE'S HONOUR IS TO BE TRUSTED"

Honour as self-esteem

Honour is the esteem that everybody has of oneself; it's the pride of belonging to a country, to scouting/guiding, pride of personal skills and professional reliability.

The moral of honour is not in contrast with the moral of loving the neighbour, actually they share common features: respecting others, treating people with honour, particularly if they are employees or subordinates.

Honour in being trustworthy

B.P. in "Scouting for Boys" says that if a scout doesn't keep his word by lying or doesn't perform a task accurately, he can be required to return his scout badges.

Being trustworthy for adults implies wider and more significant meanings in comparison to those assumed by a teenager. It means giving proof of professional skill, accepting responsibilities in family, professional, social and political life, and being able to listen.

Trust in managing the boat

The point of honour for the adult is trusting his own capacity of permanent self-education, his will to question himself over and over again, managing his own boat (B.P.) amidst difficulties, being self-confident.

2. LOYALTY AND TRUST "A SCOUT/GUIDE IS LOYAL"

Truth and freedom

As concerns adults, being loyal is a question of courage. Giving up loyalty means giving up part of one's personal freedom, and sacrificing freedom to the rules of the world.

Truth and freedom, as a matter of fact, are the same thing.

Sometimes it happens that an adult changes his mind but, at a certain age, one learns how to look at the world with a different glance. This change of mind derives from the pathway walked in the community life, by a permanent education process. In these cases changing one's mind means taking into consideration a different vision of reality, it means trying to understand the world we are living in, a rapidly changing world.

We consider loyal people those that change their minds for truth's sake and we instead consider people that do not deserve trust those who are exclusively worried about their personal interests.

The second article of scout/guide Law urges the adult upon the research of truth, requires looking at the world with realism and coherence, adopting towards other people an attitude very near to humility. Loyalty can be also considered as fidelity to one's motherland, parents, employers and employees.

3. HELPING THE NEIGHBOUR

"A SCOUT/GUIDE'S DUTY IS TO BE USEFUL AND TO HELP OTHERS"

M.D. Forestier says "The B.A. (la bonne action) is an educational device that makes people open their eyes, and lets them discover what one can do for the others."

(Une route de liberté)

Education to help

What does it mean to care for other people when you are an adult?

Help can be offered communally or as an individual act.

In the fire-clan for the scout and the guide, service does not only mean helping other people, but it has an educational function.

Afterwards service evolves from communal experience to personal commitment, and, little by little, it becomes part of everyday's life.

Helping as adults

The difference between adult service and that of the scout/guide is in helping other people not only during leisure time but also in the basic choices of one's own life, in daily attitude, more than in the participation in scout/guide community initiatives.

There's a way to do one's job, to exert any kind of activity, which witnesses a helping attitude. A person does not become an adult, nor a good citizen, unless he/she takes responsibility for something and faces the challenges of real life. Being ready to help others requires a certain amount of self-respect and respect for one's family.

Caring for the farthest neighbour, forgetting the nearest, is sometimes revealing of poor self-confidence.

A way of being in society

What distinguishes the way of being of the adult scout/guide within society is the will to help: as attention to people, starting from those

who don't have easy access to goods and education. The plurality of services is established by the plurality of historical needs typical of the age and place in which we are living.

The adult attitude in relation to service involves catching, day by day, what is necessary to build up a better world and the happiness of human beings.

Helping the town

What service should be chosen in the variety of possible interventions to help the others?

The cultural and geographical point of reference of any activity meant to help other people is the town we are living in, the town considered as model of the wider civil and human community, where economical, political and technical issues assume definite features as far as people are concerned.

A particular form of help, the gift of knowledge and of judgment, is possibly the most urgent aspect of charity today

The "charity of service", in a period in which marketing and personal success are winning, supports us in our process of permanent education, in the quest of a secular way towards a society of cohabitation.

4. FRIENDS TO ALL AND SCOUT BROTHERHOOD "A SCOUT/GUIDE IS A FRIEND TO ALL AND A BROTHER/SISTER TO EVERY OTHER SCOUT/GUIDE

Friendship is a stable availability, it is linked with durability and faithfulness

The great adventure of friendship

Friendship should be lived as an adventure, a progress made of encounters in all of which we experience the joy of meeting, of being together, of spontaneous communication, deprived from any utilitarian consideration.

It is a pathway along which everybody walks with his own pace to reach a common destination.

Two friends can sometimes walk long stretches without ever meeting; they can walk completely different roads, make completely different choices. But these differences are, above all, an opportunity of comparison, of reciprocal enrichment.

Democracy and capacity of welcoming

Being friend of all means having the capacity of collaborating with other people, nearby and faraway, and therefore it is one of the conditions to fulfil democracy. Being a friend of all for an adult means keeping the door open, it means making people comfortable.

They say that you cannot be friend of all and that true friendship is only to one or few persons; but in order to find these three or four privileged people, to find true friends, it is necessary to keep the door of your house open to everybody passing by, to invite them in.

It sounds strange but so it is: you are friend of all when you have the courage to get out from your circle of friends, from your community, your town, your nation.

Your capacity of being a friend will be put to the test when you get in contact with people of a different colour, different religion, language and different political ideas, people whose culture and traditions are different from those you were born and grew up into.

Therefore friendship for all is also spirit of adventure, is an optimistic conception of life, the one described by Kipling in "Kim", the little friend of all.

Commitment for peace

Being a friend of all, for an adult, requires an active commitment in one of the most open and, today, most urgent front, that of peace among human beings and countries.

The commitment is to express a firm condemnation against any kind of violence, being firmly convinced that wars, of any kind, are "always physiologically inadequate to bear peace".

There are two fronts in which an adult scout/guide can engage: being present in the initiatives in favour of peace and having a peaceful conciliatory attitude in personal life.

What is the scout/guide brotherhood?

The scout and the guide have an attitude of friendship towards all, but towards every other scout and guide they have a feeling of brotherhood.

It is the brotherhood that we notice during international meetings, at World Conferences, on the occasion of twinning, during travels encouraging contacts with scouts and guides from other countries. Brotherhood reveals in the help given to scout/guide associations of developing countries or countries where scouting has been suppressed.

But all this is just the first step of scout/guide brotherhood, the most immediate.

There is something else, and it is not just wearing the same uniform, nor participating in celebrations or meetings.

It's rather the feeling of sharing common values, some features in our lives, the feeling of having the same point of view, the same attitude towards some basic topics.

This brotherhood is not based on blood but on common values, those suggested by the guide/scout law.

The community as a place of brotherhood

For the adult scout/guide, true brotherhood is mainly experienced within the community.

The community has to foster reciprocal correction, it is an environment in which we can share successes and troubles; it is the brotherhood that exposes our limits, moderating starring roles.

The brotherhood is mainly fulfilled in the life of the community: in sharing tasks, in making every member important and necessary.

Listening

A further aspect of brotherhood and friendliness in adults is a humility in attitude, being ready to listen rather than imposing one's point of view, and accepting corrections from sisters and brothers. Being a brother is much more important than being "the first" or acting as the guest star in the great game of life.

5. KINDNESS AND TOLERANCE "A SCOUT/GUIDE IS COURTEOUS"

Gentle with women (for men) and with men (for women)

One of the first forms of kindness is surely not monopolising debates, offering the possibility to talk to everybody, starting from those who have more difficulties in doing it, or whose topics are less important in our eyes.

But reciprocal courtesy among men and women is not only a question of listening.

Every community of adult scouts/guides should ponder on the meaning of the spirit of chivalry mentioned by B.P., in a world where traditional values have changed.

The scout/guide Law does not only refer to men. What do courtesy and chivalry mean for a woman? We believe that the fifth article requires women to be gentle and courteous in all those expressions of consideration that men frequently miss, renouncing any kind of

flashy attitude, and not looking for visibility at all costs, abandoning the belief, exactly for the principle of equality, that, being women, everything is due to them.

Courtesy does not mean hypocrisy

Kindness and gentleness should guide all our social relations, they should not be pursued only to comply with rules and laws.

A pedagogical theory developed in the second half of last century features a tendency to belittle, even condemn, any form of courtesy and politeness; they are considered as alienating, a limit for personal freedom, and an expression of hypocrisy.

Some claim that the main goal of education is “to socialise”, to let any kind of inclination develop without inhibitions; often the sense of personal autonomy is emphasised, and freedom is regarded as possibility to do whatever one wants. The other, the neighbour, is frequently perceived as a limit to individual freedom.

For an adult scout/guide, being kind and chivalrous also means not being lenient with bad manners, starting from oneself, of course.

Tolerance, how?

At present we are all living in a situation of fierce social animosity and widespread conflict.

Restlessness and intolerance are common in everyday life, and so is an attitude of rejection of many people towards those who are seen as different. How can we restore a climate of tolerance among people? First of all it is necessary to discover again respect and trust to other, the availability of being friend of all, being loyal and willing to help, smiling and being ready to discover again the meaning of lawfulness.

6. RESPECTING NATURE, PARTICIPATING IN CREATION “A SCOUT/GUIDE IS A FRIEND TO ANIMALS”

Outdoor life as permanent education and as desert

Outdoor life is an occasion of permanent education, not only in the sense of learning new things about nature, about plants, animals, stars, but also as an occasion for putting ourselves to the test, to exceed our physical and psychological limits, to overcome the laziness of body and soul, to change our habits and discover again what is essential in man’s life.

Therefore outdoor life and the contact with nature, for an adult scout/guide, should have some features:

- they should be an occasion for essentiality;
- they should be a moment of effort;
- they should be a moment of community, pleasant though heavy sometimes;
- they should be an occasion for silence.

Most of the time we spend outdoor is dedicated to great circles, games, dances, barbecues.

Maybe we should give more space, alone or in the community, to moments for walking in the wood, marching, observing plants and animals, looking at the stars in the sky.

The sixth article proposes the scout and the guide a positive attitude, a range of things to do: respecting nature, protecting places, animals, plants.

"It is necessary to show the city brat that above the roof of the cinema, stars are shining" (B.P., Scouting for boys).

"If you want to cultivate peace, take care of the creation"

Respect for nature or, using a more modern word, ecology, is not only a pragmatic science aiming at improving the deployment of natural wealth, moderating consumptions and managing energy production. For an adult scout/guide ecology means that the earth and the creation should be considered as our interlocutors, our "travel mates".

7. OBEYING

"A SCOUT/GUIDE OBEYS ORDERS WITHOUT QUESTION"

Respecting legality

We often talk about the urgent need to discover again the "sense of legality" This expression refers to the importance of valuing the laws of human society, of the nation, of the municipality; it has been said that "obedience is no longer a virtue" but it surely it is a "relation", obeying is actually a series of intertwined relations.

Obedience as humility

Adults often respect as laws only the prescriptions corresponding to their personal vision of the world, to their habits or convenience, refusing what is not shared, what seems uncomfortable, what requires sacrifice. It is sometimes described as "autonomous morality" but it would be preferable to describe it as "intellectual pride".

Obedying, being consciously disciplined, both for adult men and women, is more difficult than it is for teenagers and young people, it may challenge personal choices and points of views.

It is the condition to accomplish a real permanent education.

Educating to citizenship

How can a young person be educated to be a good citizen?

We do believe that education to citizenship is passed on through cultural values mainly transmitted by family, school, and community.

Freedom, which is not acquired by birth, must be acquired peacefully and joyfully facing what we are obliged to do from time to time. You cannot appreciate the value of freedom if you have not passed through a discipline.

8. PEACE OF MIND AND OPTIMISM

“A SCOUT/GUIDE SMILES AND WHISTLES UNDER ALL DIFFICULTIES”

Anxiety, the contrary of peace of mind

In order to understand what the joy of living, this condition of peace of mind and optimism, is, we should think about the opposite attitude: the sense of anxiety that sometimes leads to anguish and depression. Anxiety and anguish seem to be specific features of bourgeois life, attitudes kept hidden in quiet periods that emerge abruptly as soon as social and individual certainties go missing.

Only when you have faced and overcome your moments of anguish, only then you can declare your serenity, you can whistle and sing in your heart, you can share your joy of living.

We believe education to peace of mind and optimism is an important chapter in permanent education. It is necessary to rediscover our sense of humour; we have to learn group dances, sing in choir, and laugh of ourselves.

Techno-society has multiplied the occasions for pleasure and entertainment, but it does not know anymore, what joy is.

The choice of the scout/guide, both young and adult, to smile and sing, being serene, living joyfully amidst difficulties, certainly is a way to “manage one’s boat sailing counter current” (B.P.), against the current of pessimism and of lack of commitment, of fear and of giving up dialogue.

Optimism

Laughing and singing are just a first step to the education of heart serenity, towards that typical feature of the scout/guide, optimism

toward hope. Optimism for adult scout/guide is not superficiality, for sure, nor lack of responsibility.

Scouting/Guiding: education to hope

Eric Fromm, foremost psychologist, declared that nowadays, there are basically two parties of humanity: the party of hope and the party of fright. Men and women of the party of hope look towards the future, the others are those that, facing an unknown future, look for shelter in the past to find protection and let them get caught by anguish that precludes paralysis.

If one wants to do something for education, it is necessary to enlist in the party of hope, because in any aspect of education, even personal one, it is necessary to have a model of future, individual future, and the future of global society.

It is necessary to hope that tomorrow's world can be, at least a little bit, better than today's.

If an adult aims at being part of the great family of scout/guide he must have great hope in himself, to be delivered to future generations.

9. INDUSTRIOUSNESS AND ECONOMY

"A SCOUT/GUIDE IS THRIFTY"

Transferring something to young people

According to some economical analyses, the issue of unemployment is one of the most serious questions at a worldwide level.

What can we do for the unemployed people in our town? The question is not only economical or political; it's also an educational problem.

Beside a concept of work seen as duty, nowadays there is a strong demand for of a kind of worker that can operate autonomously, with creative responsibilities

Responsibility, autonomy, creativity, ability to manage one's boat, these are all goals that B.P. proposed to teenagers and young people, but they are also qualities easily forgotten in the daily routine.

There are few people in the 60's who kept their enthusiasm and the entrepreneurship, creativity, professional values.

The community of adults must intervene: it can foster the rediscovery of professional values for the middle-aged people who have lost enthusiasm for their own job and their sense of entrepreneurship and creativity; at the same time adults should offer job opportunities to young people.

Professional ethics

There are several issues concerning professional ethics.

The discoveries and transformations that have occurred in the last few years have led to the need of moral and professional codes, particularly in some professions such as doctor, lawyer, civil servant. Our task is to recall these moral codes inside and outside our communities.

The first form of service, beside our family, is to be fulfilled in one's occupation, whatever that is: between job and service there cannot be an alternative, but a daily integration.

The world has not been made in a day, it is still taking place, and the work of women and men contributes to this evolution, day by day, one century after the other, not only the work of those who look after the environment, but all of us: the doctor, the teacher, the mother...

Being thrifty

The combination of economy and industriousness seems necessary.

Economy means, first of all, not wasting goods, time, energy, health. There is a lot of talk about essentiality, about the effort of abolishing what is superfluous in everyday life.

Being thrifty implies the ability of saving, also in view of a certain financial stability of the family we are responsible for.

For an adult scout/guide, being thrifty also means trying to explore and understand, whenever possible, the local, national, worldwide economic dynamics.

The educational issue could involve talking about the role of money and its use: in order to become an adult man or woman it is first of all necessary to be "thrifty" men and women.

10. CLEANNESS OF THOUGHTS, WORDS, ACTIONS "A SCOUT/GUIDE IS CLEAN IN THOUGHT, WORD AND DEED"

Clean life.

Cleanness and chastity are categories about which we are not going to deal with, maybe these are only relevant for teenagers.

Maybe for an adult it is better to talk about temperance, trying to find a meaning directly involving the personal process of permanent education.

Modern life proposes instead its own model of intemperance in all its aspects; it suggests us the way to happiness in the complete fulfilment of personal passions and feelings, in going there "where the heart leads us".

Maybe today temperance, pureness of words and works, self-control are no longer regarded as virtues.

Any yielding to a passion, any intemperance in one's life leads to a limitation of true personal freedom, and reduces the personal capacity of choice.

But passions are to be controlled rather than eliminated, since if they got dominant in life, they could wipe out any other interest, for example the choice of helping others.

Some believe that the tenth article of the Law only concerns boys and girls, but the problem exists at any age.

Chastity and pureness for an adult are not to be considered as giving up a pleasure but rather as the accomplishment of a global project of life.

Educating young people to steady relationships.

Talking to adults about purity and sexuality we cannot forget the issue of sexual education for young people and the projects aiming at introducing the topic in school education.

Furthermore family, the role of parents and their example must be reassessed.

CONCLUSION

The roots of adult scouting/guiding?

The origin lies faraway.

In the ceremony of the Promise, as it was defined by B.P., there is a dialogue between the novice receiving the Promise and the Scoutmaster :

"What is your wish? "

"To become a scout".

"For how long?"

"Forever with the help of God".

B.P. stated scouting is for people aged 8 to 80.

When he turned 80, he changed the number to 85.

THE AUTHORS



Virginia Bonasegale was born in Magenta/Milano (Italy) in 1949.

She started her activity in scouting when she was 18 years old, becoming leader in different branches. In 1981 she started her activity in the adult scout organization, Masci (Italian Movement of Adult Scouts Catholic).

In 1987 she was elected Regional Secretary of Lombardy and she was elected a second time in 1997; she has been a member of the Executive Committee of Masci, acting as responsible of the Organization Section.

After graduating in Political Sciences, she worked in the city administration of Magenta

for more than 35 years as Section Manager; she retired 7 years ago.

In 2007 she was elected member of the National Council and then was selected Vice-President of Masci.

In 2008 Virginia was appointed Chairperson of the local organizing committee of the 2011 ISGF World Conference held in Como, where she was elected member of the ISGF World Committee.



Paolo Linati lives in Varese (Northern Italy), where he was born 80 years ago.

He took the Scout Promise in 1946 and was a patrol leader and clan leader in the Catholic Scout Association. He was awarded the Gilwell Wood Badge after attending training camps in Italy and Switzerland.

He has a degree in Mathematics and Physics. From 1962 to 1965 he lived in Antananarivo (Madagascar), volunteering in the fields of education and schooling, taking part in the local scout movement. He joined the Masci (Italian Movement of Adult Scouts Catholic) in 1989, together with his late wife Gabriella,

deceased in 2005. He has held different offices at local and national level; in 2002 he published, together with Gabriella, the book "Adulti scout in cammino per tutta la vita" (Adult scouts on a lifelong journey).

He has three daughters and four grandchildren; he is currently serving in the education of young immigrants coming from Africa and Eastern Europe.

