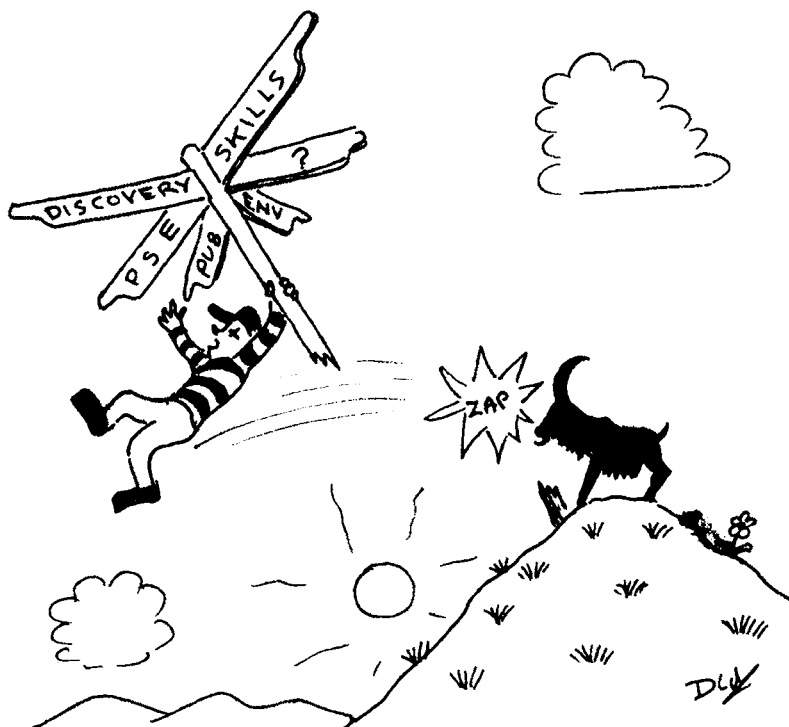


process in a way markedly different from the leader who takes groups out in order to have a different or more informal environment in which to improve working relationships with the group. With the former, "things" are the priority, with the latter, "people" are the main emphasis. These standpoints which favour either 'things' (embodying values to do with achieving a task or developing skill and becoming proficient) or 'people' (embodying values to do with good working relationships) are the two main positions or standpoints (orientations) from which to approach the leading of young people. To risk labouring the point, it should be apparent that it is doubly important for leaders to be aware which orientation is their natural preference or inclination. Without this awareness, leaders will tend to be inflexibly stuck with a particular attitude, unable to move away from it when necessary. For the first-mentioned, activist leader in the example just given, techniques and proficiency, ascents and achievement will be the main aim and end, whilst for the 'relationships' leader they will be a means to other ends concerned with effective relationships and personal development.



"A booster start in what is a difficult....often very slow process"

The programme of the former will concentrate on the acquisition of proficiency in the skills deemed necessary in the long term for many different types of situations, whilst the second will be concerned only to impart the minimum of skills necessary for the immediate particular situation so that they do not overshadow the main aim of improved relationships. For example, to include capsizing drill in a first time, 'taster' sailing session with a novice group using dinghies could be a pure waste of time. It could be a valid thing to do if the session was so set up that the capsizing was a problem to be solved as part of a team building exercise! The way in which the leaders in each situation present the 'content' of the day and conduct it, will be quite different. Leaders need to be aware of how and why they are operating in the way they do, because only then does it become possible for them to see whether aims are in harmony with style and practice (see 'style pitfalls' in chapter 4). If they are not in accord then progress along the lines aimed for will be retarded or blocked.

To be operating in a particular way, without knowing why, can be acceptable sometimes. There are leaders who can work intuitively in this way quite successfully but they can tend to be unwilling to challenge what they find. An intuitive style can be a recipe for poor quality leadership as when leadership practice becomes an extension of a leader's own personal motives for pursuing that particular activity. No censure is intended for a leader having such a personal set of motives. Indeed they are a vital element in the generation of his/her motivation to lead others. It would be abnormal if a leader did not possess such "springs for action". But it is important that such reasons are not allowed to impinge too heavily upon operations with a group.

Most leaders probably have two sets of motives and aims. The personal set is about what the outdoors means to them. The other set should be more selfless and concerned with what the leader hopes to achieve for, and with, a group of other people. The act of identifying one's own commitment to one's preferred activity confers certain benefits - only then is it possible to be able to discount or set aside these personal aims when leading. Days out which are driven by motives inappropriate for the group, whilst they may not necessarily harm the group in any way, are more prone to unproductive outcomes. Leaders not in touch with themselves may perpetrate acts of selfishness and insensitivity which can leave their groups diminished and devastated, rather than enlarged and uplifted.