

Grumble, Grumble, Grumble

DISSENTION IN THE RANKS

by Colin Wallace

In a recording by Stan Freeburg, with the scene set on a pirate ship, the dialogue starts...

Mate: "Cap'n. There are mutinous rumblings coming from the crew."

Crew: "Mutiny! Mutiny! Mutiny! Rumble! Rumble! Rumble! Rumble!"

Cap'n: "Stop that rumbling."

Crew: "Rumble!"

When I was a Scout, our troop would re-enact this piece of dialogue with our Troop Scouter whenever a Scout started to complain about an item that everyone else considered trivial. All of the Scouts thought the routine was hilarious, and never tired of repeating it. It certainly reduced time spent investigating minor complaints.

In hindsight, we should have allowed the mutinous rumblings to sur-

face, at least temporarily, so that those who felt aggrieved could get their complaints off their chests. The following exercise from the book, *Still More Games Trainers Play* by Edward Scannell and John Newstrom, is an excellent tool designed to encourage open discussion.

Don't use this grumble game for real problems. Always deal with serious difficulties — the sooner the better.

Complaints Turn to Laughter

Divide your group into pairs, each partner facing the other. Each person talks simultaneously, voicing "any complaints, reservations, resentment, grievances, irritants, gripes or concerns they have on their minds". When a participant runs out of complaints, that person

continues the dialogue by simply repeating, "Grumble, grumble, grumble!" Eventually everyone ends up reciting, "Grumble! Grumble! Grumble!" over and over; at which point you can signal for the clamour to cease.

Reassemble everyone to discuss how the exercise helped to dissipate the negative energy of the group. Discuss some of the following questions:

- How did each person feel before, during and after the activity?
- Who felt that anyone was really listening to them?
- What benefits does this activity offer?
- Did you hear any concern that deserves further examination?
- Do we sometimes end up thinking, "Grumble! Grumble! Grumble!" in our lives?
- Instead of grumbling, what can we do to reach a creative solution?

Why not try this activity as a kick-off exercise for a Scouts Own, especially if you're at camp and it hasn't stopped raining since you arrived. It might just provide the dynamic boost your group needs.

Keep your sense or humour and keep things in perspective!



Photo: Scouts Canada Archives

Address Real Problems Head-On

This grumble game is merely a fun method to deal with one or two people who are just having "a bad day". If you face a real problem, and several people agree that the issue needs full discussion, never trivialize the difficulty. Meet it head-on, encourage communications and a suitable resolution.

Start by talking about the problem. Can you identify it clearly - perhaps it has two or three elements. Mark them down on a chalkboard. Explore whether these identified problems are really the main issues, or if other problems have been simmering beneath the surface for days or weeks. This process is rarely fun, but it's vital that Scouting youths learn how to brainstorm through problems to identify the real concerns. Only then can they deal with these issues properly.

When a very difficult problem arises, youth members might want only adult leaders to deal with it, or they might see value in broadening discussion to include sixes, patrols, or even members of the Sixers' Council/Court of Honour.

When kids or adults allow significant problems to go unanswered, the difficulty can snowball into a real disaster that affects the whole group. Deal with frustrations and irritations early so they don't turn into dragons that are hard to slay. \

- Colin Wallace has run many a Scouting pirate ship out of dangerous waters. He lives in Scarborough, ON.

COOPERATIVE GAMES

These games should be played on a carpeted or grassy area.

Trust Me!

How to Play: A small group forms a tight circle with no gaps. Each person should have her hands at shoulder height, close to her body with palms facing out. In turn, each player stands rigidly in the centre of the circle and allows herself to fall to one side. Her feet must stay on the same spot in the centre of the circle. The rest of the players must gently move the person in the centre around while preventing this person from falling over completely! The centre person must keep her feet together and trust that the rest of the group will keep her safe.

Body Lift

How to Play: Divide the group into teams of nine (if possible). One player lies on the floor face up while the other eight gather around. Two should be located at the person's shoulders and head, two at the waist, two at the hips, and two at the feet. On the count of three, the eight people lift the person to waist height. On the count of three again, the person is lowered slowly to the ground. Each person has a turn being the person lifted. This activity helps to build trust among members of the group.

Group Lap Sit

How to Play: Everyone stands in a circle shoulder to shoulder and turns to face the person on his right. On the count of three, the group members move slowly into the sitting position, lowering themselves onto the lap of the person directly behind. The circle only works if the players fully trust the person behind them to support their weight.

After you complete these exercises, encourage team feedback and individual responses. Was it difficult to trust those around you to keep you safe? What were you thinking as you participated in this activity? What could have taken place to make you feel more at ease?



Photo: Scouts Canada Archives

SUPPORTING SCOUTS!

We Beat Any Price By 10%!

b&s emblem limited
 140 Engelhard Dr.
 Aurora, Ontario
 (Toronto) Canada L4C 3C8
 Telephone: (905) 841-1213 Fax: (905) 773-7745
 Email: bsemblem@netcom.ca

The Crest People

Embroidered event emblems
 District & Provincial emblems
 Camp badges & Uniform crests

Highest in quality - Lowest in prices
 Best service from coast to coast
 2-4 week delivery (seasonal)