



Key 3 Perspectives



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To the Rescue!

Many years ago when I was a Cub Scout, I attended a camp out with my family and several other families from my church. Although this was not officially a Scout outing, several of the boys and their fathers were active in the Boy Scouts. We camped alongside a relatively shallow and swift river. The

day was sunny and warm. A few people decided it would be fun to walk up river and then float down to the campsite. I was young enough that I don't recall what, if any, safety precautions were taken, but I suspect that not much thought was given to safety since we were all familiar with the river.

I remember seeing the flotilla as it rounded the bend and came in sight of the camp. Although most of the group was close together, and laughing and splashing each other, it was clear that one of the riders, a younger boy on his own inner tube, was taking a different course than the rest. The swift current quickly snagged his tube and began to drag him away from the group and toward the middle of the river. He panicked and yelled for help. One of the men on the riverbank immediately responded to his cries by donning a life jacket and wading into the river, fully-clothed, to rescue him. The water was only about waist-deep, but the strong current made it difficult to hold his footing. The man was able to reach the struggling boy just as he passed by the campsite. With one swift and powerful motion, he grabbed young the rider off his tube and made a halting march back to the safety of the shore.

I remember being impressed at the strength, courage, and skill of that man. I also remember the fear in the boy's eyes that eventually blurred into tears and finally satisfied relief. The river was not all that deep, or treacherous, but for a young boy with questionable

swimming skills and lacking in preparation, it was absolutely terrifying and could have been deadly.

When I remember that day on the river, it reminds me of the lifesaving work that each of us has—whether in a family, business, community, church, or Scouting unit. As commissioners, our job is to save Scouting units. We have Packs, Troops, Teams, Crews and Posts that sometimes need the strength we can offer. Each unit needs support to grow and strengthen each member as we strengthen the unit leaders of those programs. And everywhere there are new unit leaders who need to know they are not alone as they strive to fulfill their assignments in the best way they can—often without a Scouting background or training.

When commissioners see units that score below 2.5 on a Unit Assessment, we should be worried. That number (and below) represents those units that are at an increased risk of failure, not only in their ability to exist as viable units but also in the way they touch the lives of the boys in their units. Charles Dahlquist II, our National Commissioner, has written:

“Each of us is given, figuratively, a life ring when we become a commissioner. When there is a unit in trouble, or a leader who is struggling, or a chartered organization that is wavering, commissioners rush to the rescue. And when we do, we bring with us all the resources of the council and the district to help strengthen that unit, their leaders, and their Scouts. We are there to assist and bolster unit growth, to provide on-time charter renewal, and, through our ministering contacts, to help unit leaders know that they are not alone in their great work of strengthening the rising generation.”

I am hopeful that each time we rush into the river, figuratively speaking, to rescue a struggling Scouting unit, those unit leaders will come to realize that there is REALLY someone who cares about them and their boys. Like the boy in my story, they will be able to trust that they are safe and sound in our care.