

A Scout is Brave

Teenagers sometimes hear adults say:

”Why are you so concerned with what others think? Don’t be such a teenager! Don’t be afraid of what others say. “

I am here to tell you that this is garbage.

You should be very aware of what others think of you. It can affect your friendships, your prospects for finding a mate, and your career. In extreme cases, it can even kill you.

When you are a child, you are more happy-go-lucky. You don’t focus as much on what others think of you.

As you mature into a teenager, you become more aware of what others think. Your brain matures. There is even a part of your brain, the pre-frontal cortex, that develops as a mirror of what others are thinking. One of the reasons a comedy is funnier in a theater is that you are picking up the laughter from those around you.

The good news is that this self-consciousness signals the development of a super power. You cannot lead people unless you are aware of the impression you are making on them. This ability to see things from the point of view of others gives you tremendous power to influence them.

You have to decide what you will do with this power. What will you stand for? Aware of what others think of you, and using that information, what will be the meaning of your life?

When you reach the point of saying, “this is what I stand for, taking into consideration what others think” you have crossed the bridge from adolescence to adulthood. Doing what you think is right, aware of what others think and perhaps despite what others think, requires one quality.

You must be brave.

You must have the courage to stand for what is right, regardless of the opinion of others. This is what makes you an adult.

The 10th point of the scout law, a scout is brave, is not there for 11-year-olds. They don't worry as much about what others think of them. It is there for you, after you acquire the superpower of self-consciousness, to encourage you to transition from adolescence to adulthood.

One of the stands you can take in your life is to work for justice, equality, and the fair treatment of others, particularly those who are disadvantaged. Scouts with disabilities have many disadvantages. Working with them requires patience, the courage to be seen with them, and the imagination to see the world as they do.

We invite you to lead them. We invite you to be brave. We invite you to be an adult.

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A Scout is Brave: For all Scouts learning to become good leaders