Secret of Leadership – Do not Dominate

The discussion leader under no circumstances is expected to be a teacher or expert, or is he expected to argue points with the members of the group. Above all, he is not to answer questions or do the discussion for the group!

His chief duty is to involve all members of the group in the discussion. In practice, this means that he has disciplined himself to:

1. Respect each individual in the group, even if he privately disagrees with their views
2. Refrain from forcing anyone in the group to change his views
3. Avoid trying to reach complete agreement by all members of the group on all questions (the purpose of the discussion, and the leader’s duty, is to make the group member THINK, and to help them recognize the value of different approaches to solving problems or planning programs) and
4. Politely but firmly keep the discussion on the track avoiding tangents.

A Secretary should write down the gist of the group’s ideas, summarizing their discussion of the Rollo, not the Rollo itself. The purpose of this technique is to avoid duplication of ideas, and to assist in holding the group to the point. The Secretary can assist the Leader by relating the points raised to each other and to the presentation materials. He should also assist in handling the ‘talkative member’ the ‘off-on-a-tangent member’, or the lethargic, unimaginative group.

The report made by the Secretary not be a stenographic account of what went on in the group, but a one-minute summary. If other Secretaries report from their groups something said or raised in your group, try not to repeat.

It is suggested that on Friday, the Team Members alternate as Leader and Secretary for the first Rollo at least. Then the candidates should feel free to take over these roles.

(Do substitute ‘she’ for ‘he’ where necessary)