



Embracing The Challenge

How To Step Back and Let Your Girl Scouts LEAD

As leaders, it's natural to want to step in when we see someone struggling—especially when it's a girl in our troop. Being friendly and helpful is a core part of the Girl Scout Law, and as caregivers and troop leaders, it's hard to watch someone we care about have a tough time. But sometimes, the best way to help is by stepping back and letting girls work through challenges on their own.

A cornerstone of Girl Scouting is "learning by doing," and it's at the heart of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Girls learn, grow, and build confidence through hands-on experiences. When we, as adults, step in too quickly (or take over entirely), we unintentionally rob them of these important opportunities to develop. We've all heard the saying, "Practice makes perfect." But before girls can succeed, they need space to practice—and yes, even fail—so they can master new skills.

This isn't always easy, right? But the more we hold back, the more girls will learn to persevere, problem-solve, and navigate challenges on their own. Here are a few things to keep in mind as we encourage their growth:

Give them a chance to try.

If we intervene too soon, we're sending the message, "I don't think you can do this." So, before offering help, pause and ask yourself: does she really need assistance, or do I just feel the urge to help?

Be a scaffold, not a crutch.

Taking a step back doesn't mean you can't support. Think of yourself as a framework, providing just enough guidance to help girls complete the task on their own. Instead of stepping in, ask open-ended questions that get them thinking. For example, if they're working on a Lego kit, you might say, "It looks like that piece doesn't fit. What else could you try?"

Know their limits and potential.

While a little struggle is part of growth, too much frustration can erode confidence. Ensure tasks are challenging but achievable for their age and ability, allowing them to experience success after effort. Know the difference between productive struggle and struggle-struggle.

The journey is what truly matters, not the method.

Our programs, badges, and journeys are meant to serve as guidelines—a foundation to build something fun and engaging that lets your Girl Scouts thrive. Perfection is a myth, and learning to try again, even if it means "failing forward," is one of the best ways for girls to discover their strengths or identify areas they want to improve. And none of that is a bad thing. In fact, it's how they learn and grow!

What may seem like struggling to you could just be a different way of doing things.

It's not about following your process—it's about them finding their own. Remember, the journey is just as important as the destination.

Reflect on a time you personally struggled to learn something.

Now, recall how rewarding it felt when you finally succeeded. That struggle was essential to your sense of accomplishment. Let's give our girls the same opportunity to feel the pride of saying, "**I did this!**" Chances are, they've got it.

Learn
BY DOING



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