

Stories on the Leadership Road - Two

My First Teamwork Lesson

Andre Drouin was a very talented sign writer in LaSalle, Québec. When I was a young teenager, I worked with him helping to erect signs for real estate projects and painting the backboards for the signs that he so skillfully hand-lettered. One day when we were both working in his workshop he saw that I was struggling trying to construct a rather large wooden frame for one of his signs. He quietly stopped what he was doing and said to me: “Ted, if you need my help ask for it and if you see I need help, please give it to me.” He then paused and said: “Two people working together can do the work of three people working alone!”

The above anecdote reflects my first experience in which someone highlighted some of the key aspects of teamwork. Yes, I had played on a number of sports teams, and I had been a “Sixer” in Wolf Cubs and a “Patrol Leader” in Scouts; but, my experience with Andre was the first time someone had pointed out how I could help my team actually work in a more effective manner. Since that time, I have been interested in how teams work and the means to help them work better. Quite simply, Andre had signalled the importance of taking time to think about the processes that are used by teams to make them function more effectively.