



What It Means to Be an Eagle Scout

By Tim Falendysz

Eagle Scout by itself means to be a great Scout. It means you have achieved Scouting's toughest challenge of the advancement program. Scouting's goal is to develop each and every Scout into three basic aims, physically fit, good Citizens and good personal character. To advance through the system, strengthens each of these skills, with Eagle being the culmination of it all. Eagle means you have finished 21 or more merit badges, been a leader of your Troop, and know what it means to be of service to others. When you are an Eagle Scout, you are what Scouting would be considered to be the best. That is the text book answer to What it is to be an Eagle Scout? Now what does it really mean to be an Eagle Scout?

The true meaning of an Eagle Scout is defined in what a Scout is. The quick answer is the twelve points of the Scout Law, a pretty easy and simple answer, but not the entire answer. An Eagle Scout is someone who shows character by his "actions". Many people are confused by the material characteristics of the award. The list of "have done's" are impressive, but the "will do's" is what people should see when they see an Eagle Scout. We can talk about massive projects, endless Merit Badges, long hours of camping and challenging High Adventure programs, and we should be proud of those accomplishments. No doubt about it, do we have to brag about it? Probably not, we should accept the fact that we have accomplished them, and understand they were tools to teach us to be better people. The highest mountain, the longest river the biggest project mean nothing if we don't learn from them and make those teachings the foundation of you what you will become. We should learn that life revolves around each and every person, not each and every person revolving around us. Don't be confused with you being a leader of others who follow with demanding everything be done for you by those who follow. In the end, the respect you gain from those who follow you is the most important, exploiting that is a major offense of the values of an Eagle Scout. Eagle Scouts are Helpful, Friendly, Courteous and Kind for a reason. It leads to the service of others. It may not say it directly, but it is unwritten way of saying be considerate and appreciative of others first. When you help others, it is hard for anything but the Eagle Scout in you to show. I have rarely seen a person who put others first, being anything but a true Eagle Scout. To help others helps them understand that living by the Scout Law by the example you set is worth a lot more than a 1000 words of you telling them that you are one. Achieving the requirements set out by the Boy Scouts of America does not make you a great Eagle Scout, your actions do. Many of people have earned Eagle Scout Award as set out by the standards of the Boy Scout of America only to have the values learn forgotten after the ceremony is over. A true eagle just begins to put these ideals into practice, the ideals taught by the rank advancement system. It is rare that someone will spend years developing an education only to graduate and never use the skills they were taught... Those that are great in any profession are great not because they told us they were, but because we saw them in action. They used that education as a foundation of what they would become. Never forget to build your life on the Foundation that Scouting has taught. Remember to "show" your Eagle Scout Spirit in

everything you do. Be humble and let them realize you are an Eagle Scout by your actions. A True Eagle Scout does not become an Eagle Scout purely for the bragging rights to say he achieved Scouting's best. They earned Eagle to have the best foundation possible to build on and become even a better person.

So Eagle Scouts, don't let the meaning of the badge be confused. Let the foundation that was established IN Scouting carry on beyond Scouting. Be humble that you have the award, but be proud and respect the badge and what it represents. There are so many who have the utmost respect for the award and are very proud of what it means to them. There are many more that wish they could say they are an Eagle Scout. Never forget WHY people respect the award you have.

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