

HONOR OTHERS AS GEESE DO

When you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in a “V” formation, you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way.

As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying V formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. People who share a common direction and sense of community can better get where they are going more quickly and more easily because they are traveling in the thrust of one another.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into the formation to take advantage of the “lifting power”. If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are heading in the same direction as we are and will be willing to accept their help as well as give ours to others.

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies point. It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs. With people, as with geese, we are interdependent.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. We need to make sure our honking from behind is encouraging and not something else.

Finally, and this is important, when a goose gets sick or wounded by gunshots, and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with that fallen goose until it is able to fly again or dies. Only then do they launch out again on their own, or with another formation, to catch up with their group. If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other in difficult times just as when we are strong.

--Milton Olson