

What the Scout Law Means to Me

John Wayne

A great American, John Wayne, passed away many years ago. One of his last public appearances was at a dinner. He was riddled with cancer and knew he was close to death. The purpose of the dinner was to benefit a land purchase for a Scout Reservation called [John Wayne Outpost Camp](#).

At this dinner, Wayne recited the Scout Law. Then he did something unusual. He said the twelve points of the Scout Law are "nice words". "Trouble is" he continued, "we learn them so young we sometimes don't get all the understanding that goes with them. I take care of that in my family. As each boy reaches Scout age, I make sure he learns the Scout Law. Then I break it down for him, with a few things I have picked up in more than half a century since I learned it."

Then Wayne proceeded to explain the importance of the Scout Law, breaking it down for the guests at the dinner; much like he would have for his grandson.

TRUSTWORTHY

The badge of honesty. Having it lets you look at any man in the eye. Lacking it, he won't look back. Keep this one at the top of your list.

LOYAL

The very word is life itself; for without loyalty we have no love of person or country

HELPFUL

Part sharing, part caring. By helping each other, we help ourselves; not to mention mankind. Be always full of help -- the dying man's last words.

FRIENDLY

Brotherhood is part of that word. You can take it in a lot of directions - and do - but make sure and start with brotherhood.

COURTEOUS

Allow each person his human dignity; which means a lot more than saying, "Yes, ma'am" and "Thank you, sir." It reflects an attitude that later in life you wish you had honored more... earlier in life. Save yourself that problem. Do it now.

KIND

This one word would stop wars and erase hatreds. But it's like your bicycle, it's just no good unless you get out and use it.

OBEDIENT

Starts at home. Practice it in your family. Enlarge it in your friends. Share it with humanity.

CHEERFUL

Anyone can put on a happy face when the going is good. The secret is to wear it as a mask for your problems. It might surprise you how many others do the same thing.

THRIFTY

Means a lot more than putting pennies away; and it is the opposite of cheap. Common sense covers it just about as well as anything.

BRAVE

You don't have to fight to be brave. Millions of good, fine, decent folks show more bravery than heavyweight champs just by getting out of bed every morning, going out to do a good day's work, and living the best life they know how against the law of odds. Keep the word handy every day of your life.

CLEAN

Soap and water helps a lot on the outside. But it is the inside that counts, and don't ever forget it.

REVERENT

Believe in anything that you want to believe in, but keep God at the top of it. With Him, life can be a beautiful experience. Without Him, you are just biding time.

John Wayne then thanked those at the dinner for putting his name on the outpost camp and said, "I would rather see it here than on all the theater marquees the world over."