

LESSONS FROM GEESE



- ❑ **Fact:** The reason geese fly in a “V” formation, is that the whole flock adds greater flying range than if each bird flew alone. As each goose flaps its wings it creates an “uplift” for the birds that follow.

Lesson: People who all know where they are going and have a sense of ‘team’ will get where they are going quicker and easier. They are traveling on the consistency, trust and assistance of one another.

- ❑ **Fact:** Each goose knows immediately when he/she falls out of formation. It will suddenly feel the resistance and drag of flying solo. The goose will quickly move back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

Lesson: We all need to understand we are in this together. If we all work together toward a common goal, we will be helped and we will be helping others.

- ❑ **Fact:** When the lead goose gets tired as all leaders do, it will rotate backward into the formation and fall into place to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

Lesson: Everyone will be a leader eventually. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other’s skills, capabilities and unique arrangements of gifts, talents or resources.

- ❑ **Fact:** The reason geese honk while flying in formation honk is to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Lesson: We need to make sure our honking (positive feedback) is encouraging. The power of positive feedback is truly amazing.

- ❑ **Fact:** When a goose gets sick, wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with it until it dies or is able to fly again. Then, they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.

Lesson: If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by each other in difficult times as well as when we are strong.

“Lessons from Geese” was transcribed from a speech given by Angeles Arrien at the 1991 Organizational Development Network and was based on the work of Milton Olsen. It circulated to Outward Bound Staff throughout the United States.