

## **Guardian of the Gate**

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A video of him reading this essay is here: <https://www.youtube.com/v/iReTHibrFvY>

*Some of you appear to be standing guard at the gate. Like good guards, you are not letting anyone pass who does not have the correct password. When someone appears at the gate who does not have the correct password, you send them away. The treasure that you believe you are guarding is the SACRED ADVANCEMENT REQUIREMENTS. You believe that you must guard the gate to make sure that no boy advances who has not only met the requirements but who has met the requirements 110%. Your watchword is, "We've gotten soft on the Boy Scout advancement."*

*The problem is that you have gotten your orders wrong. You are guarding the wrong side of the gate. The treasure is not behind the gate but in front of it. The reassurance is the character of the boys in our care. Your duty is not to prevent boys from passing through but to make sure as many boys as possible do pass through.*

*Advancement is a method, as a tool if you will, that we use in Scouting. It is not an end in itself. The purpose of the advancement system is to build a boy's confidence and self-esteem. A boy learns something new, he is tested in that skill, he is reviewed, and he is given advancement. Whenever possible the test should be a natural part of the unit's program. For example, in the requirement is to cook a meal, the test should come when it's time to eat at a regular unit outing. Remember that we are not authorized to either add to or subtract from any requirement. The review is to be a reflection on a boy's experience in Scouting, not a retest. The advancement recognition must come as soon after the review as possible.*

*Some of you may have heard that advancement recognition can only be received once. I assure you that is not true. Recognition can be made many times and as often as possible. Advancement is to be positive reinforcement for a boy's achievements. If done properly it will encourage a boy toward even more advancement and toward greater confidence in himself.*

*So get out in front of the gate where the treasure lies. Guard it no more. Become an advocate for our Scouts and provide the leadership that will help them through the gate. The world will be a better place tomorrow.*