

## **BOW INSTRUCTOR TIPS AND REMINDERS, SUMMER 2008**

- **The Three Rules of Becoming an Outdoors-Woman:**

1. Be Safe
2. No Politics
3. Have Fun

And a 4<sup>th</sup> rule for instructors, *No one-on-one after-hours teaching.*

If you want to help someone outside of regular class time, make sure they bring a friend, or grab another instructor to assist with the activity. This goes for both male and female instructors.

### **Teaching Tips**

- Most women dislike competition- they prefer a cooperative environment.
- Women like very specific instructions. Do not assume they have prior knowledge. Remember to define any “jargon” used in teaching your class.
- Outline what is to be expected in the class so participants do not have fear of the unknown.
- Make sure participants know it is ok to take a break if they feel they need one.
- Let participants know where the restrooms are and try to take water breaks.
- Give participants an opportunity to ask questions.
- Offer encouragement and be genuine with compliments.
- Be aware of condescending tones, language, and inappropriate touch (if you don’t know what this means, please contact me so I can better explain).
- Some women are afraid of failure or looking stupid; make sure that you are supportive of their new experience and set them up for success.
- Demonstrate how to do something first, then let them try on their own. Be careful not to take equipment out of their hands to do the task for them. Talk them through the process so they can have success doing it for themselves.
- Nature walks and water activities like kayaking can be tricky, especially if you have a big group. Be aware of any limitations or mobility problems your participants may have. When teaching along the trail, lake, or stream, make your best effort to be sure all participants can hear you and see what you are talking about. Step off the trail and wait for half of the group to get past you, and let the end people have an opportunity to catch up; or, gather up a “flotilla” on the lake to talk to the whole group at once.

## Other Stuff

Please don't forget to introduce yourself at the start of class. It's also very important to let each participant say who they are, where they are from, and what they would like to get out of the class. This takes up some of your class time, but it makes each person feel like they are acknowledged and that they count!

It's a good idea to plan some way of recognizing or commemorating the accomplishments of the group as a whole. This builds a feeling of community and makes the experience more memorable. Taking a group photo of everyone with their equipment at the end of class is one way to do it. I might ask instructors to start our Saturday evening program by giving group recognition. You can say something nice about how outstanding your class was and we'll have a round of applause for each group. (If an instructor leaves before Saturday, I'll say something nice in their behalf.)

Last, I just want to mention my personal pet peeve in the language category: When explaining a skill, please do not say to a participant, "What I want you to do for me is..." The participants are not at BOW to do anything for anyone else but *themselves*. This might sound too picky and I don't mean to be harsh. It's just a phrase that doesn't sit well with some women, me included! Instead use phrases like, "Try this," or "One way to do this is..."

Thanks a bunch for joining us in August. I very much appreciate everyone's friendship and loyalty to the BOW program!