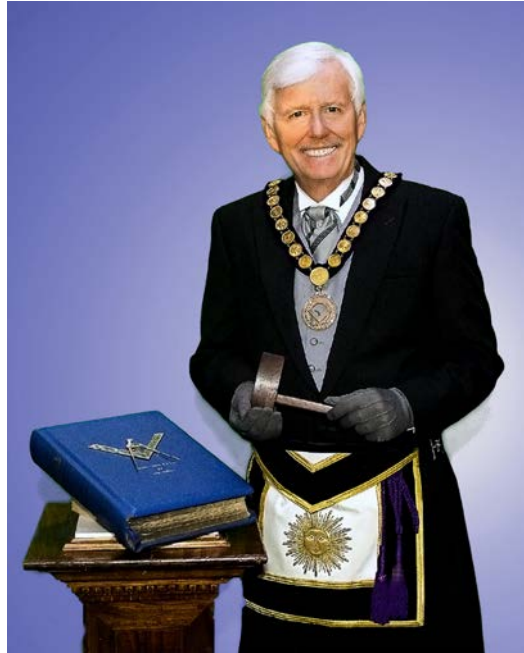


**THE GRAND LODGE  
OF THE MOST ANCIENT AND HONORABLE  
SOCIETY  
OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS  
OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY**



**A GUIDELINE OF BEST PRACTICES  
TO MOTIVATE AND REVIVE  
MASONIC LODGES**



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**Prepared by:  
The Motivation and Renewal Committee 2014-2015**

**Version: 04.24.2014**

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## INTRODUCTION

*Give a man a fish, and you have fed him once.  
Teach him how to fish and you have fed him for a lifetime - Anne Isabella Ritchie*

Under the direction of M.W. Gerald J. Sharpe, Grand Master of Masons of the State of New Jersey 2014-2015, this committee was founded for the purpose of developing a range of general guidelines and best practices as a toolkit to assist its constituent Lodges. These guidelines will help motivate and energize Freemasons of the State of New Jersey to better serve in leadership roles. Lodges and their leadership can use this toolkit as general guidance to improve their knowledge or skills needed to identify and overcome barriers to the successful operation of their programs and activities. This also enables Lodges to learn from each other and collaboratively develop further recommendations for improvement. It is not an all-inclusive document and Lodges need to mind that as this is a general guideline, some modification may be appropriate to apply at a Lodge level for it to be an effective resource to members.

The committee assembled this toolkit to:

- Serve as a training tool
- Set a baseline of best practices
- Educate future Lodge leadership
- Simplify a set of complicated topics

The Grand Lodge of New Jersey understands that over time, the reasons Men seek out Freemasonry today have changed despite the fact that its ritual, symbolism, virtues and general teachings do stem from antiquity. Many decades ago, before the advent of the Internet, it was not uncommon for members to barely talk about Freemasonry to their families and friends. Candidates often joined Freemasonry because of their fathers or grandfathers or someone they looked up to was a Mason. Today, things have changed considerably.

Now when potential candidates knock on our doors, they will have most likely researched Masonry extensively online, read books, watched movies, and in certain situations, know more about symbolism of our Craft than some of our own long time members. Lodges therefore cannot continue to be run in the manner that our brethren ran them decades and centuries ago. Today, we work longer hours and have seen significant evolution in the way technology, social interaction and communication impacts our society. Therefore if we are to succeed in our growth as an organization of Making Good Men Better then we have to evolve and improve our practices in order to survive and thrive.

Lodges face several challenges such as member participation and retention, financial concerns, officer commitment, leadership and management training. While some may feel that the answer is in attracting new members, retaining those members and keeping them involved after they are raised to the Master Mason degree is still a noticeable problem -- one that we consider as more important than attracting new candidates. It is important to pay adequate attention to our members' needs and interests in Freemasonry.

Just like a company cannot survive by selling a product that no one wants to buy, Freemasonry cannot survive if it does not provide what its members are looking for. A start in the right direction can be found by improving the Masonic education and Lodge learning experience. These challenges can also be met by developing competent leaders that are motivated, dedicated and committed to their labor in Lodges.

## **WHAT IS FREEMASONRY?**

To understand what Freemasonry is, one must answer what exactly are we: A fraternity, a charitable organization, a dinner club, a networking group, an esoteric society, or an escape from everyday life? The answer may depend on who is asking the question.

Undeniably, Freemasonry is a **FRATERNITY** first and foremost. It is true that there exists social, charitable, and esoteric sides, however we are a Band of Brothers in a Fraternal organization that attempts, through the study of its symbols, secret ritual, and ancient teaching, to take a good man and make him better. Freemasonry is also a way of life as its members try to live by a set of profound morals, and lead by example for the betterment of mankind through spiritual and moral rectitude.

However, explaining who we are and what we do to the general public can also differ at times. With the high-speed exchange of positive and negative information on our Craft online, we now have men asking more questions and turning to us for answers. While relying on word of mouth to promote our fraternity may have worked in the past, we are now presented with the opportunity to positively describe Freemasonry to the entire world. The Brotherhood should take advantage by presenting a unified message while embracing the use of various technologies at our disposal.

There is an intrinsic value to being a Mason, which we are charged with preserving. In understanding Freemasonry, we describe ourselves as being outstanding, upright, just, free, tolerant of all religions, accepting of others, of good conduct, as Men of our word, charitable, loving, and true seekers of Light and ancient wisdom. Lodges should be encouraged to advertise their sponsored events and informing the community about the organization. However actively recruiting for members by handing out petitions at street fairs, or to anyone who shows up at an open house events can potentially expose our West gate to unqualified petitioners, and severely hurt the value and prestige of being a Freemason. If a member of the community decides that he wants to be part of the fraternity, he should knock on his own.

It is said that Freemasonry takes Good Men and Makes them Better it does not say Freemasonry takes ANY MAN and Makes Him Better. We have to be careful as to whom we are accepting into our fraternity, and whom we are entrusting with our ancient ritual and secrets. Rebuilding our Fraternity should not come at the expense of performing our due diligence by properly investigating and checking every applicant. A careful approach to quality in our membership will improve motivation, leadership, and participation over time.

## **PROMOTING FREEMASONRY**

There is a thin line between promoting Freemasonry versus soliciting for new members. Our oath and guidelines indicate that all candidates for Masonry should come unsolicited, of their own free will and accord, and in the same way as all others have come before. The positive promotion of the Craft can help instill the beliefs, history and benefits of the Fraternity. Initiating better qualified and informed candidates is a part of the solution to improving quality of the lodge and its retention rates. Therefore, we must develop our Brothers to become well informed of our Fraternity to correctly and effectively communicate with any potential candidate.

Engaging potential candidates can be accomplished by the simple offer of your time to answer questions, sharing reading material, telling stories, bringing them by the lodge, or inviting them to a lodge dinner before a meeting. By encouraging questions and visits the lodge with a welcome environment, you will enable a good man to make his own decision to join the Craft

Following this practice can guide candidates to become men that are in charge of their destiny, committed to the craft and who are proud to live the life of a Freemason. The only selling tools that should be used are Time, Friendship, Patience and Knowledge when speaking with ALL men who have what it takes to walk through the inner door. Rushing the process will not lead to productive results and only serve to minimize or water down the experience. Developing new Masons is not unlike any other relationship that takes time and must be built on a solid foundation. Additionally, keeping them interested in working and growing in the craft remains up to each and every one of us. A small group of hard working and dedicated Masons will prosper more than a large group of unqualified, uninformed, and uncommitted members.

## **MEMBERSHIP RETENTION**

Membership Retention is a key factor, which will enable us to grow as a Fraternity. Our members have personal lives, families, careers and various other interests that can pull them in different directions on a daily basis. As a result, Freemasonry can “compete” for their time and attention like all other things. A meaningful lodge experience will offer a brother with what he needs to be mentally and spiritually stimulated and excited to return for more.

As leaders of our lodges we must ask ourselves, are we “Making Members”, or are we “Making Masons”? There is a big difference between the two! How many times have we brought in new members, failed to give them interesting programs to enlighten their mind, failed to hold interesting discussions in lodge, failed to enlighten them on the core teachings and secrets of our Fraternity, only to shove them in an officer’s chair and make them part of every new initiation only to see the excitement on their face change to overwhelming boredom. How many times have we seen those same new members return

less and less, or not at all? How many times when they have stop coming did we contact them to check and ask why have they not been to lodge anymore?

The brethren must be provided with something of value to come to lodge for. We must teach Freemasonry at our lodges if we expect to accomplish this. Avoid the trap of the lodge experience being only an opening, reading of minutes and closing without ever imparting some facet of our beautiful craft with the men who took time from their lives to attend a lodge meeting. Invited guest speakers are a great way to fill a lodge room to engage in topics of Masonic interest and importance. Having a variety of programs and topics are encouraged however be aware that no one joins Freemasonry to learn about the stock market, or heart surgeries or the history of the train system in New Jersey. There is no shortage of books and presentations on Freemasonry that introduced at lodge. In addition, there are a large number of Brethren (some within your own lodges) who would be more than willing to present on one of these topics for the benefit of the lodge and the Craft as a whole.

We must show every brother that he joined this fraternity for a reason, and that we understand that this reason is valuable to him. If your lodge spends hours reading minutes, voting on paying utility bills, and arguing about where to buy your bathroom supplies from, you will definitely lose your members by wasting their valuable time. If they see a value in their membership, they will retain it and be active in their lodges. Once this value is gone, they will leave.

Create a Member Retention Committee to reach out to the Brothers who may become removed from the rolls of the Lodge due to Nonpayment of Dues. The members of this Committee should work as a team to take a proactive stance in retaining the lodge's most important asset: Its membership. Working in conjunction with the Secretary, the Committee must use a positive and friendly attitude to make personal contact and respond to the various issues that may have lead to a Brother becoming delinquent making every effort to leave him with a good impression of Freemasonry.

While providing quality programs helps to maintain members, more importantly we must remember that we are Brothers first. If we don't care for each other, or show that we are there for them in good and bad times, then we cannot expect to retain them. When a brother feels unwelcome or isolated in his own lodge, he will never come back. Men join Freemasonry for fellowship and enlightenment and are willing to return as long as you offer what they are looking for.

Stimulate the minds of your existing members by providing useful topics that are useful to them. You will find that they will be able to answer YES to the question "***Am I getting what I expected from my time in Masonry?***" You will begin to see an increase in attendance and a marked improvement in membership. Make them proud of their membership in the most ancient and largest fraternity in the world.

## **MOTIVATING NEW MEMBERS**

Motivating new members begins as soon as a candidate walks through the inner door. Joining Masonry is not a quick process therefore it is important to keep new EA and FC Brothers involved, engaged and excited even when they cannot come to the lodge on a regular basis.

Here are some basic ways to engage these new members and make their time going through the degrees, just as interesting and exciting as when they become fully raised as Master Masons:

- Whenever possible, invite your newly initiated or passed brethren to be present on regular lodge meeting night.
- Invite them to participate at lodge dinners and continue to help them build relationships with ALL of the brethren of the lodge.
- During the meeting, have a Brother remain outside to interact with the new members. They can also stay outside the door and talk to the Tyler. The Tyler can explain his duties and give them insights on protocol and what is going on. Any conversation, even if it is not on the subject of Freemasonry, can go a long way in building relationships that last a lifetime.
- When appropriate, consider lowering the meeting to the lowest degree of the new Brother (eg. if there is a Fellow Craft and an Entered Apprentice, drop the labor to the EA degree) and allow them to enter the lodge and sit in the Northeast corner with a designated Brother.
- Welcome them, be warm and kind, remind them why they are in the Northeast and give them the opportunity to ask any questions and experience a lodge meeting.
- If your speaker for that night has a presentation appropriate for non-Master Masons, allow them to stay and enjoy. Provide them a good idea as to what will be coming once they are full-fledged Master Masons.

This will carry on when they are raised as they will approach others with the same kindness, respect and caring as was shown to them. The key to this is involvement. Involve everyone and do not just concentrate on the more seasoned brothers or Past Masters. Ensure that all new members believe that with conviction that the greatest apron a man can earn is the white leather or lambskin apron.

Also do not make the assumption that every new member wants to become an officer or is a good ritualist immediately after they are raised. By the time a brother is raised to the Master Mason degree, you should have developed a sense as to what are his strengths and weaknesses. While a newly raised brother may not be the best ritualist, or have the commitment to become an officer, there are several other areas where they can be best placed (e.g. go on investigations, or serve on a committee). Brothers bring different



strengths and qualities to the lodge so it is advisable that you instead, utilize every asset to its fullest potential.

## **MOTIVATING OFFICERS**

Motivating officers can be a direct reflection of the Worshipful Master and his ability to lead. Freemasonry gives a Worshipful Master total and autonomous control of his lodge but how that Master chooses to convey this is the key to having an engaged and supportive line of officers. It is said that absolute power corrupts absolutely so guide yourselves accordingly and with caution.

Masonry is one of the few organizations where a man can achieve the top position of his lodge through simple attrition. This is not to say that Brothers should be “excluded” from being Master, but rather, ensure that while serving as Worshipful Master in the East, you show examples of the proper way to lead through enthusiasm and leading by example and not by anger, bossing members around, divisiveness or any other unmasonic conduct.

Our Grand Lodge embraces the “servant” model of leadership. Servant-leadership is strongly based on ethical and caring behavior, enhancing the personal growth of members through attending to their service while leading by example. Here are a few of the characteristics at the core of the servant-leadership approach:

1. **Listening:** Leaders have traditionally been valued for their communication and decision-making skills. Although these are also important skills for the servant-leader, they need to be reinforced by a deep commitment to listening intently to others. The servant-leader seeks to identify the will of a group and helps to clarify that will. He listens receptively to what is being said and unsaid.
2. **Empathy:** The servant-leader strives to understand and empathize with others. People need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits. One assumes the good intentions of your lodge members and does not reject them as Brothers, even when one may be forced to refuse to accept certain behaviors or performance.
3. **Healing:** The healing of relationships is a powerful force for transformation and integration. One of the great strengths of servant-leadership is the potential for healing one's self and one's relationship to others. Many people have broken spirits and have suffered from a variety of emotional hurts. Although this is a part of being human, servant-leaders recognize that they have an opportunity to help make whole those with whom they come in contact.
4. **Awareness:** General awareness, and especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant-leader. Awareness helps one in understanding issues involving ethics, power and values.
5. **Persuasion:** Another characteristic of servant-leaders is a reliance on persuasion, rather than on one's authority, in making decisions within an organization. The servant-leader seeks to convince others, rather than coerce compliance. The servant-leader is effective at building consensus within groups.

6. **Conceptualization:** Servant-leaders seek to nurture their abilities to dream great dreams. The ability to look at a problem or an organization from a conceptualizing perspective means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities. For many leaders, this is a characteristic that requires discipline and practice. The traditional leader is consumed by the need to achieve short-term operational goals. The leader who wishes to also be a servant-leader must stretch his thinking to include broader-based conceptual thinking. Servant-leaders are called to seek a delicate balance between conceptual thinking and a day-to-day operational approach.

7. **Foresight:** Closely related to conceptualization, the ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation is hard to define, but easier to identify. Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant-leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future.

8. **Stewardship:** Servant-leadership, like stewardship, assumes first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others. It also emphasizes the use of openness and persuasion, rather than control.

9. **Commitment to the growth of people:** the servant-leader is deeply committed to the growth of each and every Brother within his lodge. The servant-leader recognizes the tremendous responsibility to do everything in his power to nurture their Masonic growth.

10. **Building community:** This awareness causes the servant-leader to seek to identify some means for building community among our time-honored institution.

The Worshipful Master is elected to be the Master Servant of the lodge and must lead by example. It is his responsibility to educate, excite, motivate and enlighten every member in that room (no matter if they have been a Mason for five days or 50 years). He must recognize his mistakes, make his officers comfortable in recognizing their own and work on them together. This can be done by acknowledging the officers' efforts, giving credit when due, and holding them privately responsible when necessary. Constructive feedback and friendly advice whispered in a brother's ear are additional keys to success. The Master can remove barriers and obstacles that would prevent officers from growing as individuals and performing well in the lodge. Instill the fact that an amazing year is due to every member working in unison.

He should delegate responsibilities to capable officers, help them with questions and assist them when possible, and give them tasks that will foster creativity and leadership abilities. If a man has joined the officers' line, he is seeking a larger role in the Lodge and in Freemasonry as a whole. There, he should be provided with the working tools needed to grow and provide the confidence needed to become a good Worshipful Master in the future. He should remind officers that respect is something that is earned and can last a lifetime.

The incoming Worshipful Master should establish regular meetings with his incoming Wardens and develop a three-year plan for the lodge. By utilizing a collaborative approach, this plan will benefit the lodge as a whole. Rotation of these meetings with the

successive Officers allows the plan to be continuously modified and improved moving forward.

It is suggested that the three-year plan use the SMART criteria to set its goals and objectives. These are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound:

### **Specific**

This stresses the need for a specific goal over and against a more general one. This means the goal is clear and unambiguous. To make goals specific, they must tell exactly what is expected, why is it important, who's involved, where is it going to happen and which attributes are important.

A specific goal will usually answer the five "W" questions:

- What: What do I want to accomplish?
- Why: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.
- Who: Who is involved?
- Where: Identify a location.
- Which: Identify requirements and constraints.

### **Measurable**

The thought behind this is that if a goal is not measurable, it is not possible to know whether a lodge is making progress toward successful completion. Measuring progress is supposed to help stay on track, reach target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs it on to continued effort required to reach the ultimate goal.

A measurable goal will usually answer questions such as:

- How much?
- How many?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?

### **Attainable**

This stresses the importance of goals that are realistic and attainable. That is, the goals are neither out of reach. When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them.

An attainable goal will usually answer the question:

- How: How can the goal be accomplished?

### **Relevant**

This stresses the importance of choosing goals that matter. A bank manager's goal to "Make 50 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches by 2:00pm" may be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, and Time-Bound, but lacks Relevance. Many times you will need support to accomplish a goal: resources, a champion voice, someone to knock down obstacles. Goals that are relevant to your lodge will receive that

needed support. Relevant goals (when met) drive the organization forward. A goal that supports or is in alignment with other goals would be considered a relevant goal.

A relevant goal can answer yes to these questions:

- Does this seem worthwhile?
- Is this the right time?
- Does this match our other efforts/needs?
- Are you the right person?
- Is this acceptable for correction?

### **Time-bound**

This stresses the importance of grounding goals within a time frame, giving them a target date. A commitment to a deadline helps the lodge and committee focus their efforts on completion of the goal on or before the due date. This is intended to prevent goals from being overtaken by the day-to-day crises that invariably arise in an organization. A time-bound goal is intended to establish a sense of urgency.

A time-bound goal will usually answer the question:

- When?
- What can I do 6 months from now?
- What can I do 6 weeks from now?
- What can I do today?

This approach of a strategic plan developed by the Master and Wardens prevents the lodge from take one step forward and two steps back with each new officer line. It is also important for the incoming Worshipful Master to meet upon his election, with his incoming officers and lay out his year's plans. These plans should include future important dates such as DLI, GLI, Official Visits, other important lodge meeting dates with important programs etc. Planning can help in reducing future uncertainties as it involves the anticipation of future events. Or as they say, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail."

## **MOTIVATING THE FAMILY**

Family support is of the utmost importance to our Craft. If we aren't properly supported in our Masonic endeavors, we are not going to give the full effort necessary in the tasks we undertake. Freemasonry can become a very touchy subject in the home. One brother's family could have a very favorable opinion of freemasonry while another's could be very much against it. It is also common among very active Masons to hear from their families that the lodge takes too much of their time away from home. We only have ourselves to blame for this.

One sure way to avoid such a problem is to openly discuss Freemasonry with a candidate's family immediately on the night of his investigation. First impression could make or break the negative perceptions of our Fraternity. The committee of investigation should sit down with the wife (girlfriend, sister or mother, where applicable) and explain what Freemasonry is and the level of commitment that is expected of their husband (boyfriend, brother or son). There is also a number of the activities open to families that are held at lodges, district and Grand Lodge levels. It's also up to the Brother to communicate how much he's enjoying his time and how he would like to share his experiences with his family.

It is also important to recognize that a newly made Mason's zeal could lead to the eventual downfall of the Craft's perception within his home. The Worshipful Master should pay keen attention to this possibility. We have seen many new Brothers bend over backwards in order to prove his worth to the lodge. While this passion is commendable, a delicate balance is necessary to prevent interfering with his duties at home. A Man's family is what makes him whole. While Freemasonry expands on the Man, the other half of him needs to grow as well in order to make him complete.

We recommend that the lodges understand that a brother's family plays a role in making a lodge successful. Therefore, spreading a brother too thin by requiring him to be involved with many Masonic events may not be a great idea. Balance is a key to successful involvement in our fraternity. There is also the need to be honest and straightforward of time commitment with any Brother who chooses to become an officer. The commitment of time increases greatly as he advances towards the East, but this should certainly never be at the expense of his duties to his family and job. Any Officer aspiring to become a Worshipful Master must be coached and mentored on how to balance his Lodge and Family relationships.

Lodges should also hold functions that promote family unity (eg Holiday parties for children, family picnics or outings etc.) We accomplish the best of both worlds when we are able to share in our family's joy with a nurturing lodge environment. It is recommended that the lodge holds some type of function outside of the lodge strictly for the spouses and significant others in mind (eg. a show, dinner or both). Not only will our spouses and significant others feel like Freemasonry appreciates them and is thankful to their sacrifice as we spend time away at lodge and Masonic functions, but hopefully they will develop good friendship with other spouses and significant others from the lodge and get a glimpse of that Mystic tie that bonds us all together.

## **MOTIVATING THE MEMBERSHIP**

A successful lodge motivates its members. The Worshipful Master has the opportunity to set the tone by being positive, energetic and leading in a manner that will motivate all members. This includes treating all as equals, providing interesting programs and encouraging members to play an active role by cultivating a feeling of togetherness and unity.

The Past Masters of the lodge are also instrumental in aiding and assisting with this endeavor. The experience of Past Masters should be utilized in an advisory role and their opinion should be consulted in private, and not necessarily in open Lodge. Having experienced Worshipful Brothers consistently attend meetings can assure a Master will not be left alone without their support.

Finally, a good leader recognizes the efforts of all members who help and support the lodge. It is important to publicly recognize the brethren that chaired a committee or ran a successful event. As this is a volunteer organization, a sincere public recognition can go a long way with any hardworking Brother even if he is not looking for anything in return.

## **MENTORING**

Lodges with a high retention rate of candidates who completed all three degrees and continue to attend Lodge meetings, have all implemented an effective mentoring program. When we speak of mentoring a new brother, we do not mean just teaching him the modes of recognition and cypher so that he is able to advance to the next degree. What we mean is that each candidate who petitions our fraternity and every newly made brother is entitled to an explanation of the history, purpose, operation, symbolism, philosophy, obligation and ideals of Freemasonry – not just the cypher. Mentoring is a group effort. The Worshipful Master should identify and assign a lodge mentor to oversee the process, however all members have a responsibility as well to ensure that this is a success. He should meet with the Mentor and candidates in order to outline the process and the materials needed to complete the process in a comprehensive manner.

Officers should assist the Worshipful Master in addressing any questions and concerns, monitoring that the candidate is learning his proficiency correctly and is progressing at the right speed. The members also should be available to help in anyway when the candidate is in need and they are able to. Respect for the candidate's ability to memorize and understand the material, as well as showing support and encouragement are extremely important to further developing a bond with the new Brother so that he feels the mystic tie.

Study sessions should include more than just a proficiency exam. A number of successful techniques that have been proven to work include asking the candidate to join in discussions, involve in pre and post meeting activities, lowering the lodge to the degree of the new brother where appropriate. It is also advisable to use this time to learn about other aspect in Freemasonry besides learning the ritual, steps, grips and words. Keeping them interested at this stage will ensure they will continue in their journey.

An effective Mentor should have a solid foundation and education in Freemasonry. He should be a student of Freemasonry, able to discuss the philosophies, symbolism and allegories behind our rituals. Simply knowing how to memorize the ritual is not enough of a qualification to be an effective Mentor, especially since many of our new members

come in with significant amount of knowledge about Masonic philosophy and symbolism. It is disappointing to a new candidate when he finds out that his knowledge in this area often exceeds that of the officer who has been a Mason for significantly longer time.

The most effective mentors:

- Welcome newcomers into the Craft and take a personal interest in their development and well-being
- Want to share their knowledge, materials, skills and experiences with those they mentor
- Offer support, challenge, patience and enthusiasm while they guide others to new levels of competence
- Point the way and represent tangible evidence of what one can become, both within and without our Fraternity
- Are more experienced in terms of knowledge and length of service but view themselves as equals to those they mentor

Once a new Brother is raised to the third degree, mentoring should be extended to incorporate him into the other activities of the lodge so that he feels welcomed. Communication is a key so if he misses a meeting, he should be immediately contacted to find out why. That is why we want to stress that this program DOES NOT end at the raising ceremony but when the new Brother is fully invested into the Lodge and becomes truly active. We suggest that all EA's and FC's be invited to lodge while officers are practicing ritual. The newly made brethren can hang out outside the collation room with one or two mentors to improve their knowledge about Freemasonry while the rest of the officers are in the lodge room practicing. Even after a brother has been active with Freemasonry for a while, it is recommended that he chooses one or more mentors to guide him in his journey. Whether an officer or not, a Past Master or not, it is important in our organization to have a well-informed brother whom you look-up to, to mentor you your Masonic or even personal issues. It is perfectly fine to have more than one mentor.

## **MASONIC EDUCATION**

There is an unfortunate lack of education provided in lodges. Discussing Masonic lessons in terms of philosophy, ideas, and a man's conduct is what truly transforms men into Masons. The majority of what Masons now learn is self-taught which is equivalent to a child buying schoolbooks, teaching himself and grading his own work. Each Worshipful Master took an oath at installation, to dispense some Light to the brethren and presenting a lecture or part of a lecture at every meeting. This illustrates how important education is within the fraternity.

When a Worshipful Master is planning a calendar of programs for his year, it is recommended that he utilize the speakers' bureau and the plethora of brothers within our Grand Jurisdiction to provide a talk to the Lodge if members of the lodge are unable to present such educational lectures. It is important to discuss topics that are foreign to a lodge's membership and it is sometimes even necessary to challenge our preconceived

ideologies through Masonic education. Thinking outside the box and having lectures and programs that are new, exciting and different will prove to be fruitful. Book clubs and discussion groups can be created to encourage education both inside and outside the meetings. There is a sufficient number of research on the mysteries and secrets of Freemasonry that will get many of the members hooked and hungry for more light.

Reading a short talk bulletin, having members research a topic and present their findings, bringing in a book or a Masonic paper for discussion are all great examples of fostering continued education. It ultimately does not matter how deep or how esoteric or how philosophical topics can be, what matters is that the brothers become connected and think more about what our Fraternity has to offer.

## **LODGE PROGRAMS**

The age-old adage still rings true that there aren't enough hours in the day. However, we still make time to go and participate in lodge. Therefore, it is imperative to have lodge programs that make it worthwhile to attend. A lodge cannot remain active and productive if all the Light and instruction that is imparted only focuses on lessons in lodge economics. We owe it to those hard working brethren that come seeking Light, the best possible program that fulfills their desire for knowledge and keeps them coming back for more.

Coincidentally, a well-prepared Worshipful Master has the ability to provide the brethren of the lodge with what they came to seek. The Worshipful Master should have a detailed agenda of his meeting and know how to run the business of the lodge like clockwork. For example, if the secretary informed the Master before the meeting that there are no petitions to be read before the lodge, there is no reason for the master to ask the secretary for petitions again once the meeting is in session.

The focus should be kept on the agenda of the evening and not on how much stamps cost, for example. Lodges usually have basic bills that will never change so there is no use in arguing or discussing matters that will never get anywhere. We all have a right to be heard in lodge, but unfortunately there are some brethren that often like to hear themselves talk. The Worshipful Master needs to keep the lodge on track and stay focused on getting the necessary business of the lodge out of the way so that the program of the evening can start at a decent hour.

Here are a few recommendations:

- Plan each meeting well ahead of time. The agenda must be discussed between the Master and Secretary prior to the meeting
- Streamline the meeting. Keep the business short and simple. Keeping the brethren at the lodge until 10:00 p.m. can burn them out and keep them home for good.
- Eliminate the reading of the minutes (have them printed, distributed, emailed in advance, or available on the Secretary's desk for the Brother who is interested in reading them).



- Abbreviate letters that read in the lodge (unless Grand Lodge required communications).
- During open meetings where non-masons are present, the brethren need to be at their best behavior and act in a professional manner.
- Introduce some knowledge and education to lodge.

Remember that lodge business is NOT a program. Lodge regular business should be limited to no more than 20-25 minutes if possible.

## **LODGE FINANCES**

As with any organization, it is a requirement that your lodge have a financial budget. It is not acceptable to lead a lodge without knowing where you stand financially and where you are heading. Being involved with a lodge budget should not wait until one becomes the Worshipful Master of his lodge. Getting involved early is very important to build experience and knowledge in this topic. To have a successful year, the Master should know how much money can be spent on lodge meetings, programs, and activities. There should be a systemic process for evaluating lodge dues, expenses and approved budgets while comparing to previous years. A lodge may need to hold fund raising events, or cut down on expenses, or maybe raise dues, but the bottom line is that it cannot survive into the future if its expenses are higher than its receipts.

Budget development is unique to each lodge, but some general rules apply:

- All anticipated income to the Lodge must be specified
- Whenever income is posited as a range forecast (e.g. a fundraiser will earn \$500-\$750) the lower figure should be used
- Expenditures for ongoing operations should be incorporated.
- Expenditures for new projects should be accompanied by a goal statement (e.g. the Lodge decides to support a youth team next year and why)

The brethren that are appointed into the budget committee should have some experience in creating and managing a budget. Assigning the wrong brethren to handle such an important task may lead to major problems in the future. The same goes to the committee responsible for overseeing the investments of the lodge. It is recommended that the lodge hire an independent investment advisor (not a broker) or a professional investment management firm to manage the lodge money. It would be advantageous to require that the committee members have a background in finance and or accounting. This committee must regularly report to the lodge, even more importantly, it would be wise to have the professional investment organization managing the lodge money present in person to the lodge or the trustees on a quarterly basis.

Finally, charity is one of our important virtues, but overspending on charity, while the lodge is in distress financially, does not make sense. In conclusion, if you don't have it, don't spend it!

## **CHARITY**

Philanthropy is an inseparable part of Freemasonry. While our Fraternity is known to spend approximately \$2 million a day on charity, we believe that it is our duty to take care of our own as well as the community at large. Every year our lodges spend thousands of dollars on various non-for-profit organizations but sometimes find it very difficult to help a brother who may apply to the lodge for relief.

There must be a balance in assisting the brethren of the lodge who are genuinely in distress, and participating in non-Masonic charities. Charity starts at home. If we extend our hands to our needed brethren and devote our own skills and time to their problems, then we are engaging in true, meaningful charity. Remember that we are a fraternity first, and the oath we have taken requires us to take care of each other.

## **TRESTLEBOARD**

The Trestleboard can be in a variety of formats but should be a link that keeps members informed of the Lodge's activities. Speak of the good things your lodge is doing and how you are growing as Masons, so the reader can be proud of the organization he is in and he can be encouraged to participate more. The Worshipful Master's message is a great way to offer a motivating messages and Light to the members. Keep it simple, friendly, positive and educational, and remember that you should start with the point that is most important to the reader.

Put a positive and motivating spin into your message. People like to read about the everyday events of their friends. We are good at reporting deaths but how about the activities while our brothers are alive? (births, career changes, moving, children graduating etc.) Consider adding a section to recognize specific members who went above and beyond the call of duty or to remind members of an upcoming event. Highlight success, unity and positive themes. Find a title for a section that refers to the subject and not its writer. If you are writing about how brothers should spend more time calling on the sick or elderly Masons, call it "Caring about Our Brothers"

Knowing that space is limited, use the space wisely. The calendar should include all meetings, DLI's and special events. Messages should be to the point and concise. Do not use this space as a means to vent or speak poorly of the lodge or a person. Keep religion and politics out of the Trestleboard. Write what you will read and dare to be different.

Printing of our monthly communication is quickly becoming outdated and expensive. As Grand Lodge is requiring more and more information to be included in our Trestleboards, using an electronic format is becoming the preferred option. Explore the use of PDF's or a Word Document as the means to deliver this communication via email. This will alleviate two big problems: funds and space requirements. As the cost of postage and materials have skyrocketed, the lodge can essentially create and send the Trestleboard by

email for free. Once the E-Trestleboard is created it can be used on Lodge websites and sent to each Lodge in the District as discussed in the “Relationship with other Lodges in the District” section. Remember it is forbidden to publish candidates’ information and officers’ detailed information on the web site without their consent! Remember that some of our Brethren are more private about their involvement in our fraternity for personal reasons. Do not assume that it is okay to publish their information online.

## **INTERNAL PROBLEMS AND CONFLICTS**

Addressing internal problems within a lodge can easily take up considerable space as a topic. Here are some basic guidelines to cope with internal problems, which may be helpful in aiding you and your lodge. These are only general guidelines and should be modified to fit each differing situation that may arise.

You must make sure that these internal problems do not start at the top and work their way down. Having a brother who has never run anything, never led men, never had a position of authority find himself in the East and the head of a lodge with complete autonomous control can be overwhelming not only to himself but to the lodge members as well.

As previously mentioned, there is great value to working with your officers a few years before their arrival to the East. Educate them in the art of humility and most importantly, remind them that although a Worshipful Master has total control, he has a deeper responsibility to keep peace and harmony in the lodge and should utilize the “Servant” model of leadership. Internal problems caused by an egomaniac Master should not be tolerated and these unique situations should be brought to the DDGM immediately (as all people and situations may be different). Problems from the top down can spread like a disease with no cure. Do not let this happen in any circumstance and do whatever you can (short of an intervention) to protect the integrity of the East and the future of your lodge officers. Your officers’ line is your lodge’s future, so take extreme care in its growth and advancement.

If the problem stems from officers, call a meeting (first with the offending parties) and remind them of their obligations. Try to work it out in private first, and if irreconcilable then involve Past Masters and the DDGM. Foster communication / make time at the end of every meeting for “Open Discussion”. How many times have we seen Masters fearful of people with differing opinions, debate various ideas vehemently in open lodge. With the proper controls, a Worshipful Master should be able to welcome civilized debate. Healthy debate can be seeds of growth.

As long as the parties remember their lodge protocol and treat each other with the respect at all times, you will find that the more you open the lodge for discussion, the more topics will be resolved and the more comfortable each member will become with communicating with his brethren to work out a problem rather than exacerbate it. A Worshipful Master must be very familiar with the Grand Lodge’s constitution, edicts, and regulations, as well as his lodge’s bylaws in order to govern wisely and act as a judge

between two or more parties. The study of the constitution and bylaws should start prior to attaining the East.

Finally, remember that the Worshipful Master is there to serve the membership, therefore making yourself available to your members and govern with justice and most importantly, lead by example. All the tools needed to quell internal problems can be found in our ritual book. Having a leader who can turn them into practical ways takes time and dedication to learning and understanding the fundamentals of Freemasonry. These skills obviously cannot be developed overnight.

## **DISTRICT RELATIONSHIPS**

Better communication will greatly improve the knowledge of the district level events. This helps to diminish the number of times lodges within the same district, are holding competing events. Lodges should coordinate with each other in order to properly run an event with the full support of the district. It is proposed that each district develop a calendar with their respective lodge's events. It's up to the incoming Master to give the calendar of events to the DDGM and plan accordingly for the year. The DDGM needs an event calendar from Grand Lodge in order to fill these dates ahead of time in order not to have any conflicts with local blue lodges or Grand Lodge. The DDGM can delegate the task to a trustworthy brother who can keep such a calendar up to date and who can coordinate the events among lodges in the district to avoid any type of conflicts.

It is recommended that same Lodges of the same district explore coordinating their efforts and planning events together. As most holidays fall on the same date throughout the year, it is recommended that similar events be held in conjunction with each other. It would be much more effective and rewarding to join efforts and hold a district-wide Halloween party, a Superbowl party, or a Valentine dance, instead of having multiple same-theme events taking place at the same time at two different lodges in the district. Lodges that hold events together, will allow their respective members to bond together for the benefit of our Fraternity. Costs can be split as well as the profits. The membership will be much happier having only to spend money on one major event than spend extra money on two events and having to go out for two nights instead of one.

In order for this idea to work properly, the DDGM (or whomever he delegates) is a critical component. It is his responsibility to keep track of the calendar for the district and to resolve any conflicting dates. It is recommended that such a calendar be available online for all the brethren of the district to access. Linking this calendar to the Grand Lodge calendar provides an added value. If a brother from South Jersey would like to attend a table lodge in North Jersey, he would have the information needed quickly and easily.

Additionally, no one likes the idea of conferring a degree on a candidate in an empty lodge room. Not only does it reflect negatively on the lodge, but it may lead to disappointing our candidate. It's our duty to make the initiation process one of the most

memorable moments for the candidate and we can't do that with a lodge filled with a handful of brothers. We need the help of the entire district to fill the sideline seats and form a lodge that would impress a candidate so much that he would never forget his special night. The Lodges of the same district should communicate their upcoming degree dates, and the sister lodges should make every effort to visit and support each other.

We also recommend that the DDGM and every Worshipful Master and Secretary have a current list of the brethren in their district who are proficient in ritual work (who can do which lecture, and what part of what degree). The brethren on the list must be willing to pool their collective talents and be called upon a moment's notice to perform a lecture or funeral service when needed. If a Worshipful Master finds himself in a position where his lecturer cannot make a degree, he would be able to consult the list and do the necessary arrangements to make the event happen.

The Worshipful Master needs the support of not only his lodge but of his district to have a successful year. An excellent way to find that support is by developing friendships within that district through frequent visitation. This friendship and bonding won't develop overnight, thus it is recommended that all officers travel around to different lodges and make friends and build their network to develop these relationships, so that when they're needed, faithful friends and brothers can answer the call.

We also recommend that each lodge mail a Trestleboard to the sister lodges in the district and their members. We also recommend that the Worshipful Master announces upcoming events at DLI's and when visiting other Lodges. Finally, it is crucial for our future that lodges understand that we are not competing against each other nor are we working independently from each other. We work in a "mutually coexisting" fraternity; therefore we must support one another to lift the Craft as a whole.

## **GRAND LODGE RELATIONSHIPS**

Masonic protocol illustrates that the chain of command starts with the Grand Master to his District Deputy Grand Master, to the Worshipful Master of the Lodge to the brethren. While the Grand Master is just a human being and brothers may at times disagree with one of his decisions, this is a top down organization and the Grand Master's orders are to be obeyed and respected, whether we agree or disagree with him. Any concern from a brother or an officer, must follow the right chain of command: to the Master, the Master will discuss with the DDGM, and the latter will escalate to the Grand Master if he so chooses.

While many of the brethren sometimes feel intimidated by Grand Lodge officers, it is important to remember that we are brethren first, and the relationship between lodges/members and the Grand Lodge must remain strong regardless who is serving in the elected Grand Line. When protocol is followed, there should never be any problem

between Lodges and Grand Lodge. This is a one Fraternity, and we are all brothers, regardless of positions and titles.

It is recommended that members of the lodge attend Grand Lodge functions and get to meet the elected line in person. These brethren have been elected to serve the Fraternity. Get to know our leaders, and let them get to know you. Do not assume or feel that they are unapproachable and are not easy to talk to. They will support you and your Lodge because they do understand that your success reflects on Grand Lodge and the entire Fraternity.

### **APPENDANT AND CONCORDANT BODIES**

The Appendant and Concordant bodies of Freemasonry can generate great interest and eagerness among brethren in search of more enlightenment. Any brother must be prudent in his search for more Light in Masonry. The various bodies of Freemasonry can offer a world of knowledge from which a brother can further his learning of the Craft. It is recommended that adequate time be allocated to study, understand, and appreciate the basic teachings of Freemasonry offered in the Symbolic lodge (blue lodge) before venturing into side degrees. This will encourage the new members not to overlook the lessons that can be gained from their blue lodge.

*"Buying books would be a good thing if one could also buy the time to read them: but as a rule, the purchase of books is mistaken for the appropriation of their contents." Arthur Schopenhauer*

One can accumulate hundreds of degrees and titles over the course of time, but if there is not a fundamental understanding of the principle lessons and values of the Symbolic lodge, then the "appropriation of their contents" can be meaningless. New members must be mentored that Freemasonry is not a race against time in order to collect titles and degrees. A strong foundation is needed or else a building erected too quickly runs the risk of collapse. It is recommended that a new brother puts the time and effort into his blue lodge first before dedicating the extra time and effort to an Appendant or Concordant body. In order to maintain the strong foundation of the Symbolic lodge, it is suggested that a brother balances the priority of his time when making the decision to join an Appendant body.

Many of the bodies that make up the family of Freemasonry appreciate new membership and in some instances, new brothers can end up filling vacant officer chairs and positions. This practice can remove a needed brother from his Symbolic lodge by rerouting his talents and resources elsewhere too soon. It is advisable that a brother can be an effective asset to any organization he decides to join due to the experience he has gained from his service in blue lodge. However as there are many exceptions to this rule, there is great fellowship that can be attained from joining the Appendant and Concordant bodies of Freemasonry without affecting one's performance and dedication to his blue lodge.



## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

There should be some facet of community involvement for a Lodge to truly exist in a community as Freemasonry does not exist in a vacuum. It is important for the community to become aware of the quality of men who sit in our meetings. This can be accomplished by recognizing that we are bound by an oath to be extremely careful in what we say to a profane and how we say it. Lodges are encouraged to contact local papers and have them write an article about lodge activities. Know the history of your community, march in parades, keep an updated Web presence, and participate in street fairs when possible. When participating in any public function, lodge members must present a positive image at all times. Any participation in public functions should be limited to enlightening the community on who we are and what we do, and NOT on soliciting members and handing out petitions to people passing by.

The Worshipful Master or a Community Service Committee designee should personally reach out to the officials of the community such as the Mayor and Chief of Police in the town where the lodge resides. By developing a working relationship with these community leaders, they will understand that the Lodge and its members are here in service to the community. Make these leaders aware that Masons are there to help, should they have a family in need of food, wheel chair ramps, rides to the hospital or any other similar situation. This strengthens the base for building community involvement. By extending these tokens of friendship and brotherly love, you will find that the community will have something favorable to say when someone brings up the “Masons”. The Worshipful Master must be very careful and selective when it comes to appointing a member of his lodge to the “Public Relations” committee, because that person, will represent the image of not only his lodge, but the entire fraternity as well.

## **GENERATIONS IN THE LODGE**

Masonic membership in America was at its peak in the 1950’s. Many of these brethren would be in the 80’s today. They have dedicated up to six decades of their lives to the service of the Craft. Additionally, the Craft has seen a renaissance of younger men flocking to Masonry within the last five to ten years. In some instances, we have four different generations in our membership. Each generation has seen its share of clashes between the old and young. The Freemasons are in a unique situation where the older members are revered and appreciated by the younger members. Also eager and able younger members are admired and appreciated by the less able senior members.

However, this may not always be the case in every Lodge. In some instances, there are clashes within the ages which become obstacles that can run the risk of hurt feelings and producing inactive brothers as a result. A successful lodge is able to recognize how each age group can be a vital part of the Masonic experience. Each demographic has different ways of learning, interacting and communicating. The successful lodge is one that embraces these differences to create a happy medium.

Stress the fact that as Brothers we have much in common:

- Our obligations to God and ourselves
- The mystic tie of the Fraternity
- Brotherly love of true Masons
- Passion for our philanthropies
- Listen & learn from each other

Different ideas, perspectives and experience can only help the lodge grow. By working together, understanding each other and leading together, ideal Lodges can become successful. Build meetings that appeal to all ages in Masonry. Capitalize on the experience of the older members and utilize the energy that younger members also bring to the table. Each generation strengthens us. How well we work together will determine our survival and how well we understand each other will insure our continued success!

## **CONCLUSION**

***“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.” — Andrew Carnegie***

In conclusion, each lodge has its own culture, strengths and weaknesses. However, every lodge has the potential to transform itself to become an example of a successful environment that provides a unique and outstanding Masonic experience to its members. A lodge should not assume that by doing the exact same things we have been doing for years, the results will be different all of a sudden. Our world has changed, and it is time for us to evolve and rise to the opportunity and become the largest, most powerful fraternity that we once were. We need to start making Masons, not just making members, and this is done by truly studying and exemplifying the tenets of Freemasonry, and delivering to members, new and old, on the promise that we are a Fraternity first – a Fraternity of like-minded men, good men, who have come together in fellowship, who were bonded together through a mystic tie, and who have committed to travel together on the path of enlightenment.



A special thank you goes to the following Brethren who have contributed to this living document:

**R.W. Mohamad A. Yatim**

**R.W. Cory Sigler**

**R.W. David L. Tucker**

**R.W. Keith A. Herman**

**W.B. Moises I. Gomez**

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**W.B. John A. Fudge**

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