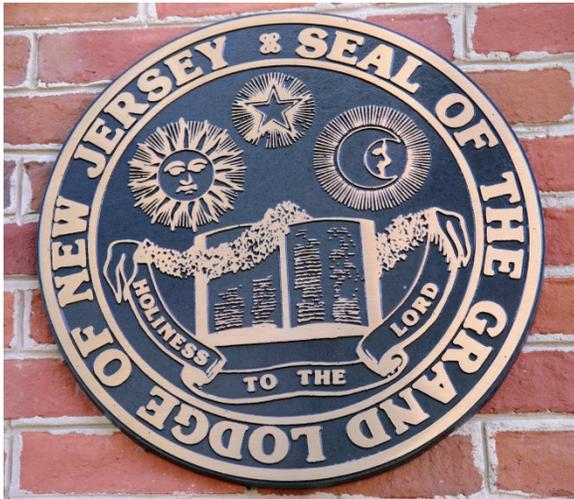


MIDDLE CHAMBER TALKS
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SHORT TALK
NO. 1

A GUIDELINE FOR
ENERGIZING AND
MOTIVATING
YOUR LODGE

MAY 2017

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Step 1: Membership Promotion

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 and manner 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 and how to correctly and effectively communicate with any potential candidate. 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.

Step 2: 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. 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. As leaders of our lodges we must ask ourselves, are we “Making Members”, or are we “Making Masons”?

While providing quality programs is essential for membership retention, it is also important that

we remember that we are Brothers first. If we don't care for each other, or show that we are there for one another in good and bad times, then we cannot expect to retain new members who come in with high expectations of the oldest and most prestigious fraternity in the World.

Step 3: Motivate Your New Members

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. When possible, invite your newly initiated or passed brethren to be present on regular Lodge meeting nights even if they had to remain outside the tyled Lodge room and interact with one another, the Tyler or the kitchen crew. When appropriate, consider lowering the meeting to the lowest degree of the new Brother and allow him to enter the lodge and sit in the Northeast corner with a designated Brother. 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. Mentorship is an essential ingredient to unlocking the potential of every new members. First a mentor can be assigned, but as the new members become more active, he will naturally connect with one of the members who will become his true Masonic mentor.

Step 4: Motivate Your Officers

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. Our Grand Lodge embraces the “servant” model of leadership characterized by:

1. **Listening:** Leaders have traditionally been valued for their communication and decision-making skills
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
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.
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
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.
7. **Foresight:** Closely related to conceptualization, the ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation is hard to define, but easier to identify.
8. **Stewardship:** Servant-leadership, like stewardship, assumes first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others.
9. **Commitment to the growth of people:** the servant-leader is deeply committed

to the growth of each and every Brother within his lodge

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

Step 5: Motivate the Family

Family support is of the upmost 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. 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. Lodges should hold functions that promote family unity (i.e. Holiday parties for children, family picnics or outings etc.)

Step 6: Motivate the Membership at Large

A successful lodge motivates its members. With the help of the Past Masters and Officers, 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. Providing quality Lodge programs is crucial in building an intrinsic value for members to feel that it is worthwhile for them to remain members of their Lodge. Whether they attend or not, the quality of Trestleboards / Newsletters, the programs provided in their Lodges, even the quality of the food offered for collation, are all elements that would either build or destroy the worth of membership in Freemasonry. Freemasons join our fraternity for various reasons, and thus it is important to cater to all members and provide them with that which they seek. No candidate joins freemasonry to sit through lengthy Lodge minutes, or unworthy discussions. The Masonic experience extends far beyond going through the usual motions. Lodge business is important but is not *the*

program of the evening. Programs have to be well thought out, planned and executed, and designed so that when the Lodge is finally closed for the evening, the members feel that they have learnt something new, and are leaving with more Light in Freemasonry than when they have come in that night. Furthermore, encourage your members to travel to other Lodges in and outside of your District to truly experience the beauty of Freemasonry and what it has to offer. Certain Grand Lodge functions will no doubt leave everlasting impressions on your members and possibly motivate them to plan and take on projects that would benefit your Lodge.

In conclusion, 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.