

**GRAND LODGE A.F. & A.M. OF CANADA
IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO**

Fraternal Correspondence Committee

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Fraternal Review

August 15th, 2012

UNITED GRAND LODGE OF ENGLAND

Quarterly Communication, Freemason's Hall, London, December, 2011.

7,893 Lodges on the Grand Lodge Register, London, District and Abroad.

The Board of General Purposes gave notice that at the next Quarterly Communication, they will move an Amendment to the Book of Constitutions to approve the design of a new emblem or jewel to formalize a new optional office within a Private Lodge.

The emblem will consist of Two Chisels in Saltire, one resting on the other in the shape of the Cross of St. Andrew. It will **designate the Office of Mentor**, to rank immediately before the Senior Deacon, to co-ordinate mentoring within the Lodge.

It is intended that the Brother appointed to this Office should ensure that every candidate (and any other Brother within the Lodge requiring guidance) is allocated a personal mentor, and that the work of the personal mentors so allocated is co-ordinated and organized. He should be able to provide guidance to the personal mentors on their responsibilities. While he should not be precluded in an appropriate case from acting as a mentor himself, that should emphatically not be his primary function, which is to act in a co-ordinating role. The Board hopes that when the Mentor is invested, as with other the Officers, he will be reminded of the duties attached to his Office.

A formal office was considered desirable in order to give impetus to the scheme and to illustrate its' importance. It has been high on the Grand Lodge agenda for some time and in his Address, the **Pro Grand Master, MW Bro. P.G. Lowndes**, took the opportunity to give clarity and perspective to **what is meant by Mentoring.**

"We all have **ideas about what mentoring is** and, for that matter, what it is not. **In an ideal world**, mentoring would occur naturally and everyone would be looked after as a matter of course. This would **ensure the progress of candidates** - the next generation - and in turn **would take care of issues such as recruitment, retention and retrieval.** One of the **aims** to keep in mind is the

"Believe in Freemasonry"

promotion of belonging, understanding, involvement and enjoyment within the Lodge. The skill will be to achieve this with a “light touch.”

But first, Brethren, **the word** itself is **translated in so many ways** - rather like our Masonry! Let me be clear - mentoring is not just about the Lodge of Instruction. Rather, **it is mostly about** pastoral care - **seeing the candidate is looked after, kept informed** and that that **support and care** remains throughout each member’s Masonic life. There are **essentially three stages**.

THE FIRST STAGE is for each candidate to **understand the basic logistics** that are involved in becoming a Freemason. It is really **about a proper welcome**. A candidate should never feel under-briefed and should be made aware of his financial and time commitment. During this stage the personal mentor answers any questions the candidate may have for him to gain a sense of belonging. In other words, **there should never be any surprises**.

THE SECOND STAGE is to **understand the basics** of the Ritual, especially after Initiation, Passing and Raising. But this understanding **should be about the ability to answer questions** that non-Masons have - so that right from the start members can counter the questions about the so-called funny handshakes, the nooses, the rolled up trousers - all these classics. The **questions** about the myths **need to be answered accurately** and without embarrassment. I am not talking about an in-depth knowledge, but more a common understanding.

We all understand the need to look after the candidates, but it is in **THE THIRD STAGE**, of **giving the confidence** – from the very outset – in order that you can speak to, in particular, family and friends about Freemasonry. That, Brethren, is vital to ensuring the future. A candidate - and this applies equally to the rest of us – needs to understand how to talk to the non-Mason about what Freemasonry means. **The aim** is to have as **many members** as possible **as ambassadors of Freemasonry**.

Ambassador is not a rank or office. It **is a mode of behavior**. On the fundamental understanding that we recruit only people who live up to our principles – an ambassador will not only understand the basics of ritual, but also, importantly, will be able and willing , with our support and guidance, to talk to family and friends about their Freemasonry as and when appropriate.

We need to have confidence in them to do so appropriately!

It is with these three stages in mind that the Grand Secretary’s working party is producing brief and succinct guidelines for the Mentor, to give in turn, to the personal mentors.

So, Brethren, the mentoring scheme is in place, progressing well, and evolving. In March, you will vote on whether you wish the appointment of Mentor to be an optional additional Office. The decision to use it is up to individual Lodges. In essence, I see it as a “light touch”, resulting in everyone enjoying their Freemasonry even more and feeling comfortable in talking to their family and friends in an informed and relaxed way.

To quote the Grand Master, **“Talking openly about Freemasonry, as appropriate, is core to my philosophy, central to our communications strategy and essential to the survival of Freemasonry as a respected and relevant membership organization.”**

Brethren, what follows is some additional information about the UGLE Mentoring Scheme.

“Believe in Freemasonry”

One of Masonry's greatest challenges right across the world is to ensure the appropriate education of our new and veteran members and also the retention of those same members. The United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) goes to great lengths to ensure such resources are readily available to their constituent lodges. They successfully achieve this goal through a relatively new program called the "Mentoring Scheme".

The UGLE places such a high priority on its Mentoring Scheme that they have created an entire separate website for the purposes of Mentoring; <http://www.masonicmentoring.org.uk/> The resources available on this website are extraordinary in their scope and in many instances are a compilation of "best practises" utilities by some of the individual lodges.

The following excerpts should provide you with a glimpse into the philosophy behind the UGLE's Mentoring Scheme:

"The Craft and its Lodges have a responsibility to provide new members with opportunities to meet and interact with others, to help them to do their share, and to provide knowledge about the Fraternity."

Raymond Hollis, "How to enthuse the new Mason", MQ Magazine, October 2004

Candidates for Freemasonry, **of the right quality**, are not always easy to find and it is therefore particularly disappointing when any Initiate feels the need to resign from the Craft. It must be in all our interests to ensure that such resignations are kept to an absolute minimum and that, when they do occur, they are not as a result of the Lodge showing a lack of interest in, or support for the Initiate.

The purpose of a Mentoring Scheme is to provide a high level of personal support to each Candidate, in order to ensure that he is able to enjoy being a Freemason, understands the principles of the Craft, and becomes involved in his Lodge and all its activities as fully as possible.

It is accepted that one person alone cannot achieve this objective. The Lodge, as a whole, must welcome, support and value its new members - indeed, every member! The Lodge Mentoring Coordinator must be assisted by other members of the Lodge, co-ordinating the Proposers, Seconders or other brethren he has selected to act as Mentors under his guidance. Each Lodge will of course approach this task in its own preferred way, but whatever that way is, there needs to be acceptance of the fact that **a structure is necessary**. It is not enough to merely depend upon a Proposer or Secunder, however well meaning they may be, for their other duties in the Lodge or an inability to attend regularly may leave the Candidate neglected.

The textbook says: *"Mentoring is a fundamental form of human development where one person invests time, energy and personal know-how in assisting the growth and ability of another person"*

Make sense? Let's make it a little more relevant:

"Masonic Mentoring is a learning process where a more experienced brother invests time, energy and Masonic experience in assisting a new brother to enjoy his Masonry to the full."

What does that last bit " .. **to the full**" mean?

Well, not everybody wants the same from their Masonry. The main thing is to ensure that our newer brethren are enjoying their masonry so much that they not only wish to stay, but also wish to take an active part.

Although a mentoring programme may be primarily aimed at new candidates and we often refer to 'newer brethren', it may also be used to encourage others who have stopped attending their Lodge as well as those who attend regularly, but whose Masonic development appears to have stalled.

Whilst any mentoring scheme, by its very nature, must inevitably be tailored to the needs of the candidate, it is not only the candidate who will ultimately benefit. In the longer term, great benefits will also accrue to the Lodge in terms of continuity, by ensuring active younger men are available to pick up and carry the baton.

Why do we need Mentors, you ask ...

It is a sad fact that recent years have seen a steady decline in the number of Freemasons within the United Kingdom. That is not all, two further worrying trends compound the situation. Many of our newer brethren leave within the first 3 - 5 years of their Masonic life and the number of active masons in each lodge is often declining.

Everybody says that the future of Freemasonry lies with the newer brethren. This is true, but what do we, as experienced masons, do about this?

This came from a brother who was questioned why he had put in his resignation within just two years of joining.

"I didn't really know what I was joining, but I knew that my Proposer was a decent and honourable man and he always spoke so highly of Freemasonry. My first night was overwhelming and I'm still not sure what it was all about. I remember everybody was very friendly, so much so that I was struggling to remember everybody's name. My Proposer was an active officer in the Lodge, but he made sure he had plenty of time to look after me that night."

"Everybody was asking what I thought of it all and a few said that it would make more sense if I quickly visited another Lodge in the area, so that I could watch the ceremony from the sidelines. My Proposer said that this was a great idea and he would give me a ring to arrange it. Well, everyone was busy and I never managed to visit before the next meeting. The next meeting was a little confusing, as I was asked to leave quite soon in the ceremony and I had to sit in the dining room. I had a good chat with the Stewards (and a pint!), but before I knew it everyone was leaving the Lodge room and it was time for the meal. "

"As I said, my Proposer was an active officer and he was really busy that night so I had to spend the rest of the evening with people I didn't know. They were very nice but I felt as if I couldn't really ask them the questions I wanted to, maybe I didn't even know which questions to ask. My wife and grown up children showed interest at first, but when I couldn't answer their questions their interest soon waned."

"I'm afraid the rest of my short Masonic career was a bit like that, as I never got to do much visiting and I went through all my degrees without really understanding any of them. As soon as I had reached my Third Degree, someone asked if I wanted to join something called the Chapter. It was at this point I stopped and asked myself what I was doing. I was in something that I didn't really understand, nobody had the time to tell me what was going on and I was being asked to get involved further."

"That was when I decided to leave. I'm in business and when my company takes people on, we make sure that they are looked after until they know their way. "

You may think the statement above is a little contrived, **but it is a true story**. Fortunately, he was persuaded to hold his decision and with a little support and encouragement he is currently an active officer himself. Furthermore, he has now proposed his son as a candidate.

What do we learn from this?

Look at the key points from the previous statement:

- Didn't really know what he was joining
- Not sure what the first night was all about
- Did not manage any visits to other Lodges
- Confused when asked to leave the next meeting (2nd or 3rd degree?)
- Felt embarrassed with his lack of knowledge
- Became a Master Mason without understanding the ceremonies
- Did not have the answers to his families' questions
- Asked to join Chapter, again without any understanding

We must ask ourselves the question "Does any of this happen in my Lodge?" If we are truthful with ourselves, we may not like the answer.

This is where Mentoring may help. Mentoring is an established developmental tool that has long been used in business, to help both new starters in their work inductions and to motivate and develop existing employees to help them fill their true potential.