

Mentoring – The Role and the Purpose

“Insanity: Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”

Albert Einstein

Surely there can be little doubt in anyone’s mind that having welcomed our Initiate into Freemasonry, there has to be some on-going care and concern for his welfare, well-being and comfort within this new Institution of ours. We need immediately to allay any fears, worries and concerns that he might have. None of us can have any doubt that there will be so many unanswered questions after the Ceremony – we have all been there. We need to explain so much. We need to assure him that once we felt the same concerns – he is no different. We need to guide, advise, re-assure, teach and give confidence.

That confidence must be instilled at an early stage of his Masonic life in order to infuse a desire to progress and reach out for those greater responsibilities, become a greater player in the team and, of course, reap those personal and inner rewards that are so prominent in Freemasonry. Do we have too many brethren that just “belong” and don’t get involved? Sadly we all know the answer to that question. There will always be those brethren that will succeed without too much encouragement, but even they will still seek advice. The purpose of mentoring could not be more clear.

Our Mentor should not only be, as the dictionary defines, “a wise advisor and guide” but also a tutor, confidant, and friend. He will be somebody who can patiently explain the sometimes difficult aspects of ritual and its symbolic representations, but will also with a sense of humour convey the fun and camaraderie that is so important in our Masonic life. He should never leave his charge without arranging or making himself available for another meeting, and very importantly, be at as many of the Lodge meetings as possible so that he can monitor our new member’s confidence, embarrassments or obvious errors.

Our Mentor will be concerned when his charge is not at a meeting. He will make discreet enquiries. Why is he not there? Is there a problem? Can I help? Questions to be answered. 9 times out of 10 there will be good reasons. Nice to know though. This is the role of an unobtrusive friend and companion just being there – from Initiation through to, and beyond, the Master’s chair.

And what about the Mentor himself? He will be, somewhat obviously, an experienced Mason but not necessarily a past Master. Far more importantly he will be someone who wishes to give some of his time and experience in helping our new brother, will want to care about his new protégé, monitor his progress and be proud of his achievements. How many new members in our Lodges have been initiated, passed, raised and disappeared? Our Mentor will be aware of this and other familiar problems.

Mentoring has to go to the very heart of Freemasonry itself.

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