

THE ROLE OF THE PERSONAL MENTOR

To be given to the Candidate's Personal Mentor

INTRODUCTION: The most important part of your role as the Candidate's Personal Mentor is to be a friend and guide to him. You will have been selected by the Lodge Mentor to be the Candidate's Personal Mentor either because you are his Proposer or Secunder or another suitable Brother, but the most important consideration is that you get on together and that you help the Candidate to become involved in the Lodge and to understand and enjoy his Freemasonry. If you achieve this, the new Mason will enjoy the full benefits of being a Freemason, he will feel confident and competent to talk about Freemasonry to his family and friends -to be an Ambassador for Freemasonry -and the Lodge will have gained a great asset.

The Pro Grand Master told Grand Lodge that mentoring a Candidate has three stages. He said "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. This understanding should lead to the ability to answer questions about the myths that non Masons have -so that right from the start, members can counter the questions about the so-called funny handshakes, the nooses and trouser leg being rolled up -all these classics. The questions on these myths need to be answered accurately and without embarrassment, I am not talking about an in depth knowledge, but more a common understanding. The Mentor can, of course, point the new Mason in the right direction for this additional and important information as they require it.

The third stage is to give him the confidence -from the very outset -in order that he can speak to, in particular, family and friends about Freemasonry. That, Brethren, is vital to ensuring the future. A Candidate -and indeed this applies equally to the all 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 for Freemasonry."

BEING A FRIEND: This is just as straight forward as it sounds. Friends look after one another, help each other and enjoy each other's company. It will help you if you have got to know the Candidate even before he has applied to join the Lodge. Ideally you will have had the opportunity to talk to his wife or partner if he has one. It is important that they are happy with his decision to join Freemasonry and become involved in the Lodge's social activities. Make certain he is aware of the time and financial commitments. Once he is a member stay in touch and should he miss a meeting and you did not know he was going to, telephone him and see that everything is alright.

THE INITIATION: As a friend you will want him to enjoy the night of his initiation. Ideally you or another Brother will give him a lift to the Masonic Hall. If he is making his own way make certain he knows where the Hall is and what time he should be there. Make certain he knows what the dress code is and, if the Lodge requires him to wear gloves after the ceremony, that he has some. It is a nice touch if he can meet the Junior Deacon before the Ceremony. If possible arrange to be sitting next to him when he takes his seat in the Lodge and that he has a copy of the Closing Ode, some money for the collection and help him with the Signs when the Lodge is being closed. At the Dinner or Festive Board, if possible arrange to be seated next to or near your Candidate. Make certain he knows what is expected of him particularly, if he has to respond to his toast, it helps if you have discussed what he has to say.

AFTER THE INITIATION: You should arrange to meet him before the next meeting, preferably in the Lodge Room, to discuss the ceremony and show him around the room explaining the important points for example the seating arrangements, the furniture of the Lodge and also to go through the Signs. This is also a good time to explain the ceremony and its symbolism. Most Provinces have a series of booklets for each degree which can form the basis of the discussion. There are also a series of papers covering each degree and its meaning on the www.masonicmentoring.org.uk website which your Lodge Mentor has access to if you have not. There is also a copy of these notes. You should arrange to meet after each of the degree ceremonies for a similar discussion.

THE NEXT MEETING: Firstly make certain he is aware when the next meeting is and of the Lodge's calendar. That he knows the dress code and whether he needs to book a meal or if there is a permanent Dining List. Again you should sit with him in Lodge, see that he has a copy of the Odes and knows the Signs. If he is going to have to leave the Lodge make certain the Lodge Mentor has arranged for him and any other new Masons to be accompanied. This is an excellent opportunity to make "an advancement in Masonic knowledge", do not let it be wasted. If there is not going to be an initiation in your Lodge in the near future try to take him to one in a nearby Lodge when they have one so he can see the ceremony.

SUBSEQUENT DEGREES: Again you will want him to enjoy these ceremonies so make certain he is properly prepared. You should make certain that he has been given the Questions and Answers as soon as possible and help him to learn his words. Some lodges encourage the Candidates to go to part of the rehearsal so that he (and the members) is confident that he knows his words.

AFTER THE THIRD DEGREE: You may need to have a couple of meetings, firstly to discuss the ceremony and its meaning, secondly to discuss the Royal Arch and its place in Pure Antient Masonry and thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, to discuss the way forward. It should not automatically be assumed that every Brother wants to go through the Chair. Some may wish to wait a while before taking an office; some may be more interested in another role such as Almoner or Treasurer. It is very important for everyone to proceed at their own pace and in their own direction.

CHARITY: It is important that we all understand, not only our obligations to the Masonic Charities, but also the important work that they do. You should introduce the new Mason to the Charity Steward and the Almoner as early as possible so that they can talk to him about them.

AMBASSADOR FOR FREEMASONRY: Many brethren are reluctant to talk about Freemasonry to their family and friends others are very happy to do so. Every Brother should feel confident and competent to discuss Freemasonry if it comes up in conversation and to dispel the myths.

CONCLUSION: Helping a new Brother to enjoy and become involved in his lodge is one of the most important roles that you can take on. If you can also help him to understand Freemasonry and to talk confidently and competently to his family and friends about his enjoyment then you will not only have helped a Brother. but also Freemasonry in general and hopefully have found it fulfilling and enjoyable yourself.