

From the East

Installation Speech Excerpt



During my speech at the installation, I mentioned some words of encouragement to young Masons, past Masters, and "middle-aged" Masons. Middle-aged Masons - those brothers that have been raised years ago but have never become officers or involved members - make up the bulk of our membership here at Peoria #31. Since many middle-aged Masons did not attend that fine December day, I would like to again say a few

words of encouragement for them now.

"To our middle-aged Mason brothers: Success in Masonry is not measured by the years you've BEEN a Mason but by how you spend those years AS a Mason - growing and ever learning."

I've stated before in a previous installment of The Trestleboard: "Don't count the years of being a Mason, make the years of being a Mason count."

They both address the same issue, don't they? As I stated before: "We learn from this that longevity proves a great span of time but nothing else. It doesn't address how the time is spent." If you don't spend time learning the craft, putting into practice the great moral lessons learned, and continually working to improve and grow AS a Mason, then you will succumb to a disease that I call "Freemason Fever" or FF.

FF has many symptoms ... one forces you to simulate a Mason by claim only (I took the degrees and that's all I have to do). Another is lack of focus causing easy distraction (I can't attend lodge because, ah, let me see now, oh, yeah, I have to go shopping). Yet another symptom causes fatigue (I didn't go to the pit roast dinner because I fell asleep). Freemason Fever, in one way or another, forces you to live the same life you lead before becoming a Mason. So, what have you gained by this experience in your life? FF robs you of your life's adventure.

True brothers of the craft need to exhibit zeal and devotion to the principles which lead them to become involved in Freemasonry in the first place.

But don't despair. There is a cure.

To cure FF and grow as a Mason, I prescribe liberal lodge attendance. You need to be at meetings so lessons can be learned and applied to your life. This represents a beginning, like taking pills for what ails you.

Then you need huge amounts of extending a helping hand to raise a fallen brother. Applying yourself to helping others will stop the nagging cough of indifference to mankind.

Becoming involved in a committee will get rid of the stay-at-home bed sores that usually accompany the worst cases of FF.

Doing what the doctor tells you will cure your disease and put you back on your feet. So attend lodge, help others, and join a committee.

The best way to grow as a Mason is to serve in some form or another. Staying at home or allowing the hustle and bustle of life to take the wheel of your growth as a

Mason will infect you with Freemason Fever. And, unless you do something to counteract this infection you will remain a terminal case.

To those of you middle-aged Masons infected with Freemason Fever I say:
Involvement is the cure.

Fraternally,

Wayne De Vlieghe – Worshipful Master



From the West

CONSCIENCE + FORTITUDE + HUMILITY =
CHARACTER

There is an old saying, *“Good judgment comes from experience, experience comes from poor judgment.”* This being true, then why do we struggle so with doing the right thing? It stands to reason, the experience of poor

judgment is a lesson we can easily obtain from studying the misfortunate decisions of others, with no need to insist on making all our own mistakes.

Do you remember when your Mother warned you not to touch the stovetop in hopes you wouldn't injure yourself on a hot burner? Did you trust her wise counsel or did you find your blistered hand submersed in a bowl of ice water?

Poor judgment doesn't always include physical peril. Too often it's a vacuum of conscience that allows us to justify inappropriate actions towards our family, our community and our Lodge. If we assign a burden to someone else, then we can blame them if they fail and take credit if they don't. We denigrate important matters into trite obscurity. We attempt to quench our wayward souls by trying to *"get away with it! Whatever it is. Again and again.*

For decades, as a Fraternity we have deliberately lowered our standards on promises of greater results. We give lip service to our self imposed laws and centuries old teachings. We adore titles in lieu of competency and leadership. We seek shortcuts or someone to lie on our behalf. We blur the distinction between *"a reason"* and *"an excuse."* Vindicating ourselves as we rationalize away our culpability.

As Freemasons, we have purposely sought to find a higher calling in this life. To put ourselves under the microscope rather than on a pedestal. Understanding, as humans and despite our accumulated life experiences we will make some bad decisions. Our ultimate reward comes from being dedicated to pursuing the unheralded peace of mind that comes from having done the right thing in the first place. There is no comfort in hindsight.

In the Hiramic Legend, the 1FC does not say, “Had I remembered the lessons taught me in my youth.” He says, “Had I **OBSERVED** the lessons taught me in my youth.” Knowing right from wrong isn’t enough, choosing and doing the right thing at every opportunity is what truly matters.

May God bless us and forgive us all

Ed Barron – Senior Warden

