

Being a True Masonic Brother

Every Freemason is a masonic Brother by definition; however, there are brothers and brothers. This article is my take on how you can become more than just a masonic Brother; it's about how you can become a true masonic Brother by helping another in his Freemasonry and at the same time improve your own masonic skills. Most new masons need help in their masonic learning and this usually comes in the form of an older Past Master teaching him the fundamentals.

There are people who think teaching is easy and anyone can do it because we all went to school and had teachers who explained things by just talking to us. What we probably didn't see at school was the hours of preparation our teachers put in before our lessons started. There are those who tell you about a topic or where to find it in a book and expect you to be able to learn it and repeat it. In our Masonic ceremonies we are expected to repeat Charges word for word.

A better teacher would explain the topic, ask you for questions and give you further explanations to help you understand. Just about everyone agrees that the delivery of a Charge is better when the deliverer understands the story behind the words.

A really good teacher is one who gets you to find most of the answer for yourself and then helps you refine any mistakes and fill in any blanks. This is because we learn, understand and remember much better when we have been involved in the discovery process and been down many blind alleys learning what doesn't work as well as what does work. Teaching is the skill that helps another person to learn. So a good question is *how do we help another person learn?* There are four simple rules.

Rule 1 — you need a topic to focus on, and the Education Curriculum gives you lots of these. (A copy was sent to your Lodge Master and both his two Wardens so ask to see it.) Then, either the person who wants to do the learning or you as teacher needs to select a topic or two from the curriculum to focus on. Don't select more than one at a time or you will lose focus before you've even started.

Rule 2 — you must not “tell” but assist in discovery. This is because the learning that results in the best understanding and good memory is when the learner discovers for himself. So, you as teacher must ask/tell/cajole/inculcate/exhort the learner to go away and discover for himself as much as he can about the chosen topic and meet again in two or three days time (not three weeks). The reason for this is to do with *human nature* in that most people work better under a little bit of pressure. So, if your next meeting is in three weeks the learner will probably do nothing for two and a half weeks and then he will start to do the work. Save these two-and-a-half-weeks by setting the next meeting in three days.



Rule 3 — at this next meeting you, as teacher, must listen to what your learner has found — all of it — without comment or criticism — until the end. Then you may comment — but not criticize. There is always the temptation to butt in and cut corners, especially with a slow learner but as a good teacher you must control that temptation and resist speaking until the learner has told all.

There will be times when the learner stops and asks “Is that right”? A good teacher will not give the one-word yes or no answer but will ask the learner if he thinks it's right and why he thinks it might be wrong and get into a discussion with the learner. If you are lucky enough to have two learners together, let them

discuss without your intervention unless something dreadfully wrong is stated.

Rule 4 — make the learner speak more than you do. You, as teacher, must learn this skill by practice and perseverance. Practice how you will respond to a question you already know the answer to, practice not giving the answer but how you will lead the learner to discover the answer for himself. Practice the phrases you could use to lead a mason to discover an answer.

This good teaching method is what we call *Mentoring* and has been proved over and over in all walks of life to lead to better learning through understanding. This, in turn, leads to better memory and delivery, and that in our case, leads to better Masonry. In this way you will assist him in understanding his Masonry more deeply and so will you. You will both come to appreciate and enjoy your Masonry and bond in Brotherly Love. Over time the two of you will become TRUE MASONIC BROTHERS.

And it applies equally well to experienced Masons and Past Masters. We can all benefit from having a true Masonic friend to discuss things with. We can all make a better daily advancement in our own Masonic knowledge when we discuss why, when and how we do the things we do in Freemasonry. I firmly believe we should all have a Mentor, even Officers of Grand Lodge, even our Grand Master and, I believe we all should be a Mentor to another masonic Brother. If we're honest all of us could improve our Masonry but don't like to let on or ask for help from another Freemason. This would be the living proof of Brotherly Love (helping and assisting another), Relief (of ignorance) and Truth (of why we are Freemasons).

Your Division run training sessions in this mentoring role. If you are interested in helping another Mason in his learning and want to learn how to become a True Masonic Brother please contact your District Education Officer. Failing that contact me drgeorgeallan@gmail.com and I will put you in touch with the training people.

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Chair of Education Pillar