A letter from the Grand Secretary to newly-appointed Lodge Mentors

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE LODGE MENTOR

Dear Brother Mentor

Firstly let me congratulate you on being appointed to the important office of Lodge Mentor. The Board of General Purposes have stated that your role is to coordinate mentoring within your Lodge and to see that a Personal Mentor is appointed to every Candidate and preferably to joining members and other members of the Lodge if they need one as well. It is not necessary for you to act as a Personal Mentor unless you believe that in a particular case it is required. It is your responsibility to ensure that the mentoring process is not only implemented, but that it also works effectively in your lodge. These notes are intended to be an introduction to your role. You will receive more detailed information from the District Grand Mentor, W.Bro Ian McLean. He may run workshops and seminars to help you understand your role further and provide material to help the Personal Mentors with their work so you should contact him following your appointment.

Whilst the District Grand Mentor is your main source of information, there is also the Masonic Mentoring website www.masonicmentoring.org.uk for you to use as a library and a resource.

The three stages of mentoring a Candidate

The Pro Grand Master told Grand Lodge that mentoring a Candidate has 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 to enable him to gain a sense of belonging. In other words, there should never be any surprises.

The second stage is an understanding of the basics of the ritual, especially after initiation and then passing and raising. The 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 the trouser leg being rolled up – all these classics – accurately and without embarrassment. We are not talking about an in depth knowledge, but more a common understanding. The Personal Mentor can, of course, point them in the right direction for the additional and important in depth information as they require it.

The third stage is to give the new Mason the confidence - from the very outset - in order that he can speak to family and friends, in particular, about Freemasonry. This is vital to ensuring the future. A Candidate - and indeed this applies equally to all of us - needs to

understand how to talk to non- Masons about what Freemasonry means. The aim is to have as many members as possible as Ambassadors for Freemasonry.

To fulfil your role you need to:

- Be fully aware of the mentoring process, what it is trying to achieve and what 'success looks like' in your lodge.
- Make sure that all the members of your lodge are aware of mentoring and what benefits it will bring to the lodge. Perhaps you could deliver a short paper on mentoring in open lodge. (A good example can be found on the following website: www.masonicmentoring.org.uk)
- Enable Personal Mentors fully understand the aims and objectives of the programme.
- Encourage Personal Mentors attend any training courses or workshops provided.
- Find "the best fit" between each Personal Mentor and the lodge member. This will of course vary according to the size of lodge and the availability of suitable Personal Mentors. Please see the section "Who should be a mentor" on the www.masonicmentoring.org.uk) website for further advice on this.
- Become involved in the early stages of a Candidate's application to the lodge. This allows you to start thinking of a suitable match. Remember not to disregard the Proposer and Seconder, as they may have the ability to fulfil the role.
- Take time to ensure the Candidate and Personal Mentor form a good relationship. Do they sit together both in the lodge and at the Festive Board? Is there a good relationship between them and the Proposer and Seconder?
- Assess how mentoring is working within the lodge. You may wish to report regularly to the lodge at committee meetings or take the opportunity to give a Lodge Mentor's report in open lodge.

Some other examples of good practice are:

· You to arrange for the new members and their Personal Mentors to visit other lodges to see the ceremonies they have recently experienced.
· You to arrange discussion groups with new members from other nearby lodges.
· You to arrange for the lectures to be performed by the lodge when there is not a ceremony.
· You to give a Mentor's Report in lodge and at Committee Meetings.

Finally

It must not be forgotten that it is not only the new members that need to be mentored. Many of the lodge officers would benefit from having a Personal Mentor, particularly the Wardens as they approach the Chair. The Lodge Mentor must also be aware that many brethren once they have been Master feel that there is no further role for them and they drift away from the lodge. You should look to these brethren particularly to act as Personal Mentors either for Candidates, joining members or lodge officers.

More importantly, try to make sure that all this is done in good heart and with fun. Mentoring exists to help develop good masons and support your lodge. If it works, everybody wins, and you will be in the enviable position of making that happen.