

## Grand Lodge's Role.

The role of Grand Lodge is to :

1. Provide continuing support of Masonic Mentoring as a fundamental Masonic activity.
2. Provide central support to Provinces, acting as a conduit for the exchange of proven practices between Provinces.
3. Maintain an update web page on Masonic Mentoring.
4. Advise Provinces on the implementation of new information on Mentoring.
5. Measure overall effectiveness of Mentoring Schemes.

*Grand Rank should be regarded as a challenge to greater effort and as an incentive to shoulder greater responsibilities.*

*All of you whether you hold these appointments or not, must remember the importance of training the next generation, which is precisely why the Mentoring Scheme has been set in motion.*

*It is designed eventually to mentor members at all stages of their Masonic progress initially this will be for candidates during the three degrees.*

*(Excerpt from the Annual Craft Investiture address by the MW The Grand Master, HRH The Duke of Kent, K.G. on 27th April 2011.)*

## The Province's Role

The Province is pivotal to the success of the scheme. Its role is to:

1. Manage the scheme locally.
2. Appoint a Provincial Mentor who,
  - a. prepares Mentoring guidance and booklets tailored for the Province,(1st, 2nd & 3rd, degree guides).
  - b. supports Lodges
  - c. provides guidance and assistance to Provincial Assistant Mentors
  - d. organizes training for Provincial Assist Mentors, and Lodge Mentors
  - e. listen to Lodges' experiences.
  - f. Attends conferences on Mentoring organised by Grand Lodge
3. Measure effectiveness of the scheme in the Province.

## The Role of the Lodge

The essence of an effective Mentoring scheme is the one to one relationship between the Personal Mentor and the new member, also the Personal Mentor and the Brother who is making progress towards the chair.

The Lodge Mentor has essentially an organizational and support role to the Personal Mentors, He should select the appropriate Brother to be a Personal mentor. as for new Initiates this should be, as first choice his Proposer or Secunder. The Personal Mentor should be aware of his responsibilities and is aware of what needs to be done. The Personal Mentor should be encouraged to meet the candidate before his Initiation preferably at his interview.

In short the role of the Lodge is to :

1. Invest a Lodge Mentor at Installation meetings
2. Make sure the Personal Mentors are presented to the visiting Officer at Installations, so that he can receive his lapel badge
3. Ensures applicants receive a fitting introduction to masonry
4. Make sure the appropriate brother who is appointed as Lodge Mentor can take on the role for several years.

A Good Lodge Mentor will have indentified a number of Personal Mentors who will be fully aware of their role. The Personal Mentor is asked to present the degree guide booklets after each ceremony, in open Lodge, then accompany him to his seat. to retire with him when a higher degree is being worked, and to sit with him at the festive board.

## Personal Mentors.

The role of Personal Mentor is the key position within the whole Mentoring process. It is the Personal Mentor who imparts knowledge, spends time with the candidate, and guides and supports him throughout his Masonic journey. By helping him take the correct first crucial steps, you will be guiding him on a path that will change his life, and the lives of those around him, for the better.

The responsibilities of a Personal Mentor are great, but the role is also, in many ways, an easy and enjoyable one. Mentoring is not rocket science. It is simply a process of spending time with a candidate and exposing him to information in a controlled manner, i.e. small understandable chunks that he can easily digest, whilst making sure he starts to understand what is happening around him.

The Personal Mentor will have support from the Lodge mentor and the Assistant Provincial Mentor, also the rest of the brethren, for it is in everyone's interest that he is successful in his role.

Masonic Mentoring is about making a difference and as Master masons we should remind ourselves of the following.....

*"--- the badge with which you have now been invested.... whilst it marks your own superiority, it calls on you to afford assistance and instruction to the Brethren in the inferior Degrees."*

*taken from the 3rd Degree address to the candidate.*

Mentors come in all shapes and sizes. Some will be retired brethren with many years Masonic experience, whilst others may well have an age profile more in keeping with that of the younger candidate. As a result, the amount of time they are able to commit to mentoring will vary considerably. However, there is one thing they will all have in common or certainly should have, and that is enthusiasm for the concept of mentoring and a realisation of its importance to the future of Masonry.

## Why Do We Need Mentors?

It is a sad fact that in recent years there has been a steady decline in the number of Freemasons within the United Kingdom. That is not all; two further worrying trends compound the situation. Many of our newer brethren leave within the first 3 to 5 years of their Masonic life, and the number of active elderly masons in each Lodge is declining.

Everybody says that the future of Freemasonry lies with the newer brethren. That is true, but what do we, as experienced masons, do about this ?

**This came from a brother who was questioned why he had put in his resignation within just two years of joining.**

" I didn't really know what I was joining, but I knew that my Proposer was a decent and honourable man and he always spoke so highly of Freemasonry. My first night was overwhelming and I'm still not sure what it was all about. I remember everybody was very friendly, so much so that I was struggling to remember everybody's name. My Proposer was an active officer in the Lodge, but he made sure he had plenty of time to look after me that night.

"Everybody was asking what I thought of it all and a few said that it would make more sense if I quickly visited another Lodge in the area, so that I could watch the ceremony from the sidelines. My proposer said that was a great idea and he would arrange it. Well, everyone was busy and I never managed to visit before the next meeting. The next meeting was a little confusing, as I was asked to leave quite soon in the ceremony and I had to sit in the dining room. I had a good chat with the Stewards(and a pint!), but before I knew it everyone was leaving the Lodge room and it was time for the meal."

" As I said my Proposer was an active officer and he was really busy that night so I had to spend the rest of the evening with people I did not know. They were very nice but I felt as if I couldn't really ask them the questions I wanted to, maybe I didn't even know which questions to ask. My wife and grown up children showed interest at first, but when I couldn't answer their questions their interest soon waned".

" I'm afraid the rest of my short Masonic career was a bit like that, as I never got to do much visiting and I went through all my degrees without really understanding any of them. As soon as I had reached my Third Degree, someone asked if I wanted to join something called Chapter. It was at this point I stopped and asked myself what I was really doing. I was in something that I didn't really understand, nobody had time to tell me what was going on and I was being asked to get involved further."

" That was when I decided to leave. I'm in business and when my company takes people on, we make sure that they are looked after until they know the way."

You may think that statement a little contrived, but it is a true story. Fortunately, he was persuaded to hold his decision and with a little support and encouragement he is currently an active officer himself. Furthermore, he has now proposed his son as a candidate.

What do you learn from this?

- a. Didn't really know why he was joining
- b. Not sure what the first night was all about
- c. Did not manage any visits to other Lodges
- d. Confused when asked to leave the next meeting (2nd or 3rd degree)
- e. Felt embarrassed by his lack of knowledge
- f. Became a Master Mason without understanding the ceremonies
- g. Did not have the answers to his families' questions
- h. Asked to join Chapter, again without any understanding

We must ask ourselves the question "Does any of this happen in my Lodge?" If we are truthful with ourselves, we may not like the answer.

This is where Mentoring may help. Mentoring is an established development tool that has long been used in business, to help both new starters in their work inductions and to motivate and develop existing employees to help them fill their true potential.

## **What is Masonic Mentoring ?**

*" Masonic Mentoring is a learning process where a more experienced brother invests time, energy and Masonic experience in assisting a new brother to enjoy his masonry to the full."*

What does that last bit..... " to the full" mean?

Well, not everybody wants the same from masonry. The main thing is to ensure that our newer brethren are enjoying their masonry so much that they not only wish to stay, but also wish to take an active part.

Although a mentoring programme may be primarily aimed at new candidates and we often refer to " newer brethren", it may also be used to encourage others who have stopped attending their Lodges as well as those who attend regularly, but whose Masonic development appears to have stalled.

Whilst any mentoring scheme, by it's very nature, must inevitably be tailored to the needs of the candidate, it is not only the candidate who will ultimately benefit. In the longer term, great benefits will also accrue to the Lodge in terms of continuity, by ensuring active younger brethren are available to pick up and carry the baton.

## **What does a Personal Mentor Do?**

The role of a Personal Mentor is to help his charge find his own level of participation and to support him in doing so. In this way, he will be encouraged to maximise his participation and will hopefully remain enthusiastic about the organization he has joined.

If the Candidate does not wish to embark on a path of continuous Masonic development, he should not be rushed. To be taken through each step of the learning process slowly will, in such cases, ultimately achieve better results.

It is important that the candidate feels comfortable in his Masonry. At first he will have many questions and concerns that are at quite a basic level, such as when do we meet? What do I wear? etc. These basic questions should be answered before any attempt is made to introduce him to the more ' involved' aspects of Freemasonry.

As all good operative Masons know, we must have solid foundations upon which to build a strong structure. So it is with the Candidate. Cover the basics first, for only then he will be ready for the next step.

### **The Mentoring Relationship.**

The role of a Mentor and Personal Mentor is more than just a teacher, being more of an advisor, coach, confidential counsellor and sounding board. In fact, the role of a teacher will only exist during the initial stage of the process. Yes, there is a lot to learn for a new mason and there will be times when a Mentor does sit down and impart knowledge (teach). perhaps by explaining a section of ritual or the role of a specific office. However, this is just the basic part of the mentoring process which will probably occur mainly at the start of the relationship as the candidate progresses through the three degrees. True mentoring will come when a candidate starts to manage his own learning and is guided along this path by his mentor.

A mentor will also act as an advisor. Advisors are people we seek out, to obtain specialist knowledge or advice on how to deal with a certain situation. To be able to carry out this role, the mentor and personal mentor must have credibility with the candidate and hold their respect. But how do you gain such credibility and respect? Several tips are worth bearing in mind. Firstly, be true to yourself. Secondly, be clear on your strengths. Thirdly, be clear on your limits.

## **Who Should be a Mentor?**

In ideal circumstances a Mentor or Personal Mentor would be :

- a. Someone who the Mentee can relate to and establish a natural rapport.
- b. Someone not currently holding an office in the Lodge, or at least not an onerous one demanding their presence during the meeting or at the meal afterwards.
- c. Someone not likely to be encumbered with a time consuming office for some years to come, as mentoring may be required for a relatively prolonged period.
- d. A member who regularly attends lodge meetings and rehearsals, with sufficient time outside of normal Lodge attendance to meet with the new brother if required.
- e. Outgoing, with a friendly personality.
- f. Someone capable of being helpful to new and inexperienced brethren.
- g. Enthusiastic about his Freemasonry.
- h. A good communicator.

Compromise will frequently be needed and when it is, priority should always be given to those characteristics' which will result in the development of a lasting friendship between Candidate and Mentor. If the Mentor is of similar age profile and is a good communicator with an outgoing and friendly personality, the mentoring is more likely to prove successful. Any perceived lack of detailed knowledge on the part of the Mentor can easily be addressed with the support of the Provincial Assistant Mentor, and training must be made at Provincial level.

Support for Lodge Mentor.

As a Mentor you may have your own development needs and whilst you will be expected to treat the experience of mentoring as a learning curve for yourself, you may well need advice and support to do this.

- a. Who would you consider as being your Mentor? You should try to identify at least one other person who you could turn to for advice in the absence of the Provincial Assistant Mentor.
- b. Networking, Get to know other Mentors. Talk to them about your experiences and problems.
- c. If needs be do not be afraid to refer to a member of the Provincial Mentoring team.

d. Attend any Mentoring meetings organized by the mentoring team and benefit from the shared experience.

### **How to be a Mentor**

It is important to meet a candidate before and after each degree ceremony to put him at ease and to answer any questions he may have.

Regular meetings thereafter will assist in the implementation of a development program which allows the candidate achieve his goals.

The amount of time necessary will vary considerably from Candidate to Candidate according to the level of self confidence and the amount of research they may have undertaken privately. Nevertheless, even with the most confident of candidates, considerable work may be involved and you should not consider becoming a Mentor unless you are able to make a real commitment in terms of time.

In addition a Mentor should:

- a. Present to degree booklet to the candidate in open Lodge after each ceremony.
- b. Sit with the Candidate during the Lodge meeting.
- c. Where possible sit with the Candidate at the meal and introduce him to others present (i.e. Lodge members, their guests and visitors).
- d. Accompany the Candidate when he is required to leave the Lodge when a higher degree is being worked. This is a useful time for answering questions and explaining what has happened.
- e. Explain Freemasonry, it's structure, Offices, symbolism, ceremonial, and demonstrate the correct manner of saluting etc. Ideas of what to cover will be provided by the degree booklet and the Provincial Assistant mentor.
- f. Take a supportive interest in the progress made by the Candidate. Congratulate him on his progress and encourage him to develop it still further.
- g. help the Candidate to learn his ritual as he progresses in the Lodge. Not just the words, but more importantly, their meaning.
- h. Encourage Candidate to play a full part in the life of the lodge, both ceremony and socially.

There are of course different stages in the overall process of mentoring namely-

### **1. Getting Started**

The first meeting, whenever and wherever that takes place, should be a time to get to know one another, building rapport and sharing experiences outside Freemasonry. Talk about the expectations you both have and especially the level of confidentiality.

### **2. Laying the Foundation**

As the partners get to know each other, it is possible to establish what each expects of the other. As candidate and Personal mentor get to know more about each other, so trust is established and a point is reached where discussion can take place openly and honestly.

### **3. The Progressive Stages**

The Personal mentor helps the Candidate to increase his knowledge and acts as a confidant and motivator. At the end of each meeting there is an opportunity to find out what he thought and answer any burning questions that he may have.

It is essential the candidate appreciates he may speak with you at all times in the strictest confidence. He will hopefully recognise you not only as his mentor, but as a friend.

Ask if he feels you are helping him settle in. Try to assess his level of interest, is he responsive, does he ask questions? Does he ask spontaneously for help or guidance or are there signs of hesitation, discomfort or even avoidance./

Should you at any time feel your relationship with the Candidate is becoming strained in any way, you should immediately seek guidance from the Lodge mentor or the Provincial Assistant Mentor.

### **4. And Finally.**

As Mentors we should be encouraging the Past Masters to Mentor the Deacons and Wardens.

Encourage new brethren to attend Initiates evenings with their wives/partners, accompany them if necessary to enable them to meet the Senior Brethren in the Province on an informal basis.

Encourage Inner Guards, Deacons and Wardens to attend " Progression to the Chair Meetings" Wives/partners are also invited.

Inform them of the advantage of joining the "Adair Club" to help them get to know other Brethren in the Province. Full details can be found on the Provincial web site . ( [www. pgl Somerset.org.uk](http://www.pglsomerset.org.uk))

### **Conclusion.**

If the Mentoring Programme is followed, the Lodge will have a new member with a clear understanding of the fundamentals of Freemasonry and who will have met and enjoyed the company of members of the Lodge . By joining the Lodge of Instruction, if you have one, he will have become involved in the ritual and ceremonial proceedings of Freemasonry more quickly than may have otherwise proved possible. He should therefore be in a position to thoroughly enjoy his Freemasonry. In short, by looking after, taking care of and instructing the new Brother, the Lodge has gained a valuable new addition to its membership and the Craft in general is strengthened.

Do not allow any member to be cajoled into joining any other Degree or Order until he is ready. Obviously the first step in his progression should be the Holy Royal Arch ( Chapter) as it is the conclusion of Pure Ancient Freemasonry.

Be in no doubt the future of Freemasonry is in the hands of our newer Brethren.

But in whose hands are they?

Who is shaping those that will shape the future of our Order ?

As a Masonic Mentor you will not only be helping your charge to embark on a full and enjoyable Masonic career, but also safeguarding the future of your Lodge.

And who knows?

**Maybe the future of Masonry.**

**When you complete your term of office please pass this to your successor.**

**W.BroRayBeckingham.ProvincialMentor. email [atthebayray@gmail.com](mailto:atthebayray@gmail.com)**

