

## **The Importance of Leadership Training to Officers and Lodge By Right Worshipful Roger W. Peak**

Leadership training is provided to officers and potential officers to prepare them to lead the Lodge. It helps (1) to prepare them to fulfill their tasks and responsibilities at each position; (2) to better understand the operation of the subordinate Lodge; and (3) to better understand the operation of the Grand Lodge. Many tools are available to officers and members to prepare them to become leaders. Here is a discussion of some of them.

For many, our first introduction to Freemasonry was the ritual. The Manual of Work provides some of the catechism for the Degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason. The Manual of Ceremonies includes the procedures and ritual for many of our public and private occasion, including receiving the Grand Master and recognizing our Masonic Veterans. When our Brethren enter the Celestial Lodge, we are governed by the Instructions Governing Masonic Funerals and Evening Memorial Services. If you are interested in a fun event that includes giving toasts, The Table Lodge explains the ritual.

With the catechism learned, it is important to gain a better understanding of the ritual. A good place to start is to review the set of three booklets (The Degree of Entered Apprentice, The Degree of Fellowcraft, The Degree of Master Mason and More Light in Masonry) that you received when the first three degrees were conferred. In addition, study the information in the Entered Apprentice Educational Proficiency Manual, Fellowcraft Educational Proficiency Manual, and Master Mason Educational Proficiency Manual to better understand the ritual and basics of the subordinate and Grand Lodges. Finally, you gain increased understanding by reading information such as the responsibilities of a Master Mason that are discussed in the Mentor's Manual.

A few months have transpired and now you consider your friends and relatives who might be a good addition to the Lodge. You begin by reading Share the Light of Freemasonry that discusses all aspects of membership. You also distribute The Public Ceremonies of Freemasonry, Freemasonry: A Way of Life, The Church – and Freemasonry, and For Your Information to potential candidates because they provide general information about the Fraternity. You also review Instructions on Approaching a Prospect and The Question of Solicitation to review the guidelines for contacting potential candidates. You also discuss hosting a Bring a Friend Night Program with your Worshipful Master to introduce prospects to the Fraternity.

A Petition for Degrees is read for the first time. Your Worshipful Master asks you to be a member of the Investigating Committee, so you read For the Investigating Committee to gain more information on preparing for the visit. You also take a copy of Taking the First Step and Questions and Answers for the Postulant to give to the candidate to help him prepare for the initiation.

One of your friends has requested a Petition for Degrees, and you agree to be a recommender. You review the statements on the back of the Petition to remind yourself of the responsibilities of a recommender. You recognize you have a responsibility as a Mentor and review the duties enumerated in Mentoring a New Brother. You also want to learn more about the Fraternity and enroll in and complete all of the Leadership Correspondence Courses.

A few months pass, and you now aspire to be elected Junior Deacon and eventually serve as Worshipful Master of your Lodge. You prepare by reading and studying the Suggested Minimum Steps for Lodge

Officers. You also read Master Masons and Prospective Lodge Officers and A Primer for Junior and Senior Deacons, and begin completing the exercises in The District Education Officer's Manual for Training of Subordinate Lodge Officers and comparing your answers with the suggested Answer Set.

As time passes, you are elected to more advanced positions within your Lodge. You read A Primer for Junior and Senior Wardens and A Primer for the Worshipful Master. You also read Masonic Etiquette, Protocol, and Decorum; A Lodge Officers Training Tool, and the Lodge Financial Manual to learn more about these important topics. You also review Planning Your Year in the East and A Guide for Planning Your Year as Worshipful Master to learn additional information. You also consider the suggestions in Meeting Management to make each communication informative for your members and visitors.

Now, you have been elected and installed as Worshipful Master of your Lodge. You meet with your officers and update the long-range plan previously prepared for the Lodge as described in the Lodge Management Certificate Program. You also ensure that each member desiring to contribute to the Lodge has a job, task or function that will make them feel important and contributing members of your Lodge as detailed in Jobs to Keep Our Brethren Active and Our Lodges Healthy. You ensure that your Lodge is known to the community by undertaking one or more projects in the Handbook on Lodge Community Service Projects. Finally, you involve your wives and widows in activities as discussed in the Mason's Lady and Establishing a Widow's Program pamphlets.

As Master, you have a question about whether the Lodge may participate in the local parade, and you consult the Virginia Methodical Digest for the answer. A sojourning Brother comes to your Lodge who is a member of Beaver Valley Lodge No. 43 in Oregon so you consult the List of Lodges—Masonic to find out if it is a regular and recognized Lodge and the Brother can be admitted.

Four additional publications should be noted. The Secretary's Manual contains guidance for Lodge Secretaries. Annually, the Proceedings of the Grand Annual Communication are published. The Manual for Masonic Trials contains the procedures for conducting a trial for a Brother charged with a Masonic offense. The Virginia Masonic Herald is mailed to Virginia Masons several times a year. Supplemental editions are available on-line; these may be printed and disseminated to Brethren.

This refers to over 40 publications that are available for our benefit to help us become better members, officers, and leaders. Many of the publications mentioned are available from the Grand Lodge of Virginia website ([www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org](http://www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org)). Those that are not available for download may be requested from your Lodge Secretary. All Masons are encouraged to make use of these publications. Share the information with other members, and most important, act on the information. The information in these documents does no good, if they lie dormant on a shelf or in a file cabinet.

If you have any questions about any document or want guidance on a topic for which you do not see a publication, contact the Grand Provost. He is working with the progressive Grand Line Officers to issue new publications and revise existing publications.