

Education & Enlightenment

A Special Committee of

The Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry of Canada



Effective Leadership

A man applying for membership to the fraternity may not have any designs to be anything else in the organization but to be a member. To consider leadership in Freemasonry could be far from his mind when he enters through the west gate.

The members of the lodge, however, may have an opposing view, that the new member could be an officer and indeed could be a leader of the lodge and of the craft. Members see potential in all candidates, probably far from the view that the candidate may have.

Scottish Rite Lodges are no exception. A brother having had some experience of a Craft Lodge – membership and perhaps even office experience, may enter Scottish Rite with the simple idea of expanding his knowledge of the fraternity and enjoying the fellowship that Scottish Rite shows.

The facts are however, that Freemasonry needs leaders. Indeed all fraternal organizations need leaders. The subject therefore of leadership is of paramount importance to the fraternity if the fraternity is to continue to develop and be the strong fraternity it should be. Questions arises then - who will be the leaders, what kind of leadership do we need, and what do we do in our organization to assist members to move towards the leadership of Scottish Rite?

The paper focuses first on these questions and in the end your analysis of the kind of leadership that is required. This discussion paper is divided into three sections:

- a] What is leadership and what characteristics are essential in any leadership role?
- b] What style of leadership best suits our fraternity?
- c] How does Scottish Rite manage the training of its members for the kind of leadership it needs.

The word, **Leadership**, when 'googled,' will turn up in millions of sites in less than half a second.

Google "**Masonic Leadership**," and 616,000 hits will appear in 0.16 seconds. Simply put, there is no end of material dealing with Leadership. The task is to draw from these, and the plethora of books on the subject to determine what makes a good Masonic Leader.

Much of the leadership characteristics and material are contained more for the leadership of corporations and big businesses rather than Masonic Leadership. Not all characteristics of leadership required in corporations are required in Freemasonry and it is that point that needs to be explored. In the world of business the bottom line is effectiveness of the CEO and his team to create a big profit for the shareholders -- that makes for good leadership. In Freemasonry we are dealing with brethren who are volunteers – no salaries attached – and therefore working with a team of volunteers tends to create a different set of leadership characteristics required to be successful in a Lodge,

In his book, *The 8th Habit*, Stephen Covey lists in the appendix a comprehensive overview of all the leadership theories that have been, at one stage or another, the 'in' style of leadership. Much of it is relevant to the question in hand and it is worth reviewing this list to

gain an understanding of the complexity of the subject. The list of characteristics have been the words used in describing leadership styles, and which may be relevant to our question, what style of leadership does Scottish Rite require? This is not an exact science. As you work through this paper, you will certainly base your thoughts upon the styles of leadership that you have experienced, the leadership skills that you already have (and we all have some leadership qualities in us) and especially the leadership styles you have witnessed in your life as a Mason in your Masonic environment.

A] What is Leadership?

The quotes on leadership are varied and fascinating. They come from people of all walks of life and tend to have been said after some experience in being a leader or experiencing leadership that was good and bad. An interesting website for leadership quotes which is often tapped by this writer is

<http://www.leadership501.com/leadership-quotes/316/>

I quote:-

When nothing is sure, everything is possible. Margaret Drabble

In matters of style, swim with the current;

In matters of principle, stand like a rock. T. Jefferson

The only real training for leadership is leadership. Antony Jay

The task of the leader is to get her/his people from where they are to where they have not been. Henry Kissinger

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail. Ralph Waldo Emerson

People are more easily led than driven. David Harold Fink

The very essence of leadership is its purpose. And the purpose of leadership is to accomplish a task. That is what leadership does – and what it does is more important than what it is or how it works.

Colonel Dandridge M. Malone

Or this:

There is much talk of developing leadership in our Masonic organizations, and, while people keep arguing about what leadership really means, they all agree that it's a positive thing. They're wrong. John C. Maxwell, the leadership guru, holds that leadership is nothing more and nothing less than influence. That idea turns the commonly understood vision of leadership as a good on its head. Influence is value neutral, and so leaders can be positive or negative, depending on their values. Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler were both leaders, but only Churchill's leadership was based in positive values, and thus only Churchill could bring about positive outcomes. If we have a negative person in our lodge, that person is a negative influencer. Likewise, if we have a Brother who is consistently positive in outlook, regularly helpful, and genuinely concerned about others, he is a positive influencer. Our job as leaders is to find and encourage the positive influencers in our lodges, while preventing damage from the negative influencers. By doing so, we increase Freemasonry's health, and magnify our own positive influence. Michael H. Shirley

One of the most significant styles of Leadership, which has been popular in recent years has been Servant Leadership.

The phrase "Servant Leadership" was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader*, an essay that he first published in 1970. In that essay, he said:

"The servant-leader *is* servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions... The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature."

<http://www.greenleaf.org/whatiss/>

Service is the foundation of our Masonic Philosophy that of serving our society to make it better while we learn to become better ourselves.

Greenspan suggested ten characteristics of a Servant Leader:

- Listening
- Empathy - understanding
- Healing - therapeutic
- Awareness – consciousness and responsiveness
- Persuasion – influence and opinion
- Conceptualization – visioning
- Foresight - prudence
- Stewardship
- Commitment to other's growth
- Community building

There appears to be a strong correlation to these characteristics and those that our masonic philosophy expounds.

However there are also some other important characteristics that complement these. In *The Leadership Challenge* (James M. Kouzes & Barry Z. Posner (2003)), the authors asked the question to many business and government workers – what are the most important characteristics of a Leader? They surveyed these groups in 1987, 1995

and 2002. In all three surveys, the top four characteristics selected by workers were:-

- Honest
- Forward-Looking
- Competent
- Inspiring

The next characteristic was at least 20%age points lower than these – (they were the characteristics of intelligence, fair-minded) – a significant percentage difference.

Such results of longitudinal studies points to a consistency in leadership over a time when society was changing, and technology was improving and becoming more important in our lives.

All four characteristics are also significant to the leader in Freemasonry. We are reminded constantly to be honest and true. Our work in planning both our personal lives and the work of freemasonry requires us always to be visionary. Working with men of high quality tends to make us more skilled and knowledgeable. The work we do and the small achievements we personally make build us to be inspiring and inspire. **We aspire to inspire.**

b] What style of leadership best suits our fraternity?

Responses to this question may vary, because of the 'style' of the masonic lodge and its location. Urban lodges usually demonstrate significant differences from rural lodges. Lodge character is created through the collective characters of the membership. The ethos, the culture, of the lodge is created over time.

In most cases the initiate will observe the character of the lodge that he enters and work immediately to become part of the group. Much

of the mannerisms of members will be observed by the new Scottish Rite Mason. He in turn is trying, as quickly as possible, to identify with the culture of the lodge – he wishes to be part of the lodge as soon as he can. Therefore he watches the members interacting with each other, the kind of speech that is used, and works towards imitating.

Each lodge could be considered an individual study of leadership.

c] How does Scottish Rite manage the training of its members for the kind of leadership it needs?

Several Scottish Rite areas of our country regularly offer training weekends. Sharing experiences, comparing past knowledge of good leadership in action, all bring together some material that a Mason can take away from the workshop and begin to use. Lets us return to an earlier comment – we all have leadership skills in us. We have to have. They will come from observing our parents, and extended families, our teachers, professors, employers and employees, top management and middle management, church, organizations, sports coaches and team members. For a brother to say he has no ability to lead really suggests that his weakness may be that of planning, directing, delegating.

Finally here for your interest is a short article on Leadership – the art of asking questions, yet another extension of the Leadership genre.

Leadership Finesse: The Art of Asking Questions

Whenever I ask people what they feel the biggest leadership problem is, I always get the same answer. It's not lack of integrity, poor decision making, or lack of vision (although that's #2). Poor Communication is cited as the number one shortcoming of leaders. Poor communication is often the cause for unnecessary conflict, improperly done work, and weak, uninspired performance.

One of the causes of poor communication is poor questioning skills. Questions are excellent tools for clarifying concerns and degrees of comprehension as well as for developing the skills and perspectives of others. As a leader refines his or her leadership competencies, the art of asking questions must be honed. Let's look at how the proper use of questions can be used to clarify, develop and persuade.

Clarify Concerns and Comprehension

Asking questions is the key to ensuring clarity and avoiding misunderstandings. That's pretty obvious. And yet,... I find that many people haven't taken the time to develop their question-asking skills. Recently, a client brought up the details of his review in our coaching call. It wasn't so much a review as a summary of problems he was having with others. After talking through these issues through with him, it became evident that there was a recurring theme of ineffective communications – both on his part and on the part of others. In a couple of instances, he assumed one thing, not thinking that the other person could (and in fact did) assume something different. In other cases, his words were misconstrued which led to inaccurate conclusions about him and his intentions.

Both situations could have easily been cleared up and altogether avoided by asking a few important questions. Clarifying someone's intention can often avoid a confrontation or a missed deadline. But let's be honest, the hard part isn't knowing which question to ask; It's in knowing when to ask a question. A key factor in the art of asking questions is to be aware of one's own feelings. Mastering the art of asking questions requires an awareness of when you're assuming something. When you catch yourself assuming, you need to stop and ask for clarification. Assuming leads to misunderstandings, miscommunication, and stirs unnecessary emotions. It takes practice to be mindful of when

you are making an assumption, but once you are aware, you'll ask much better questions and you'll have the ability to be a much better communicator and a much better leader.

Developing Others and Changing Perspectives

Asking questions also allows you to develop people. When someone comes to you with a problem or concern, asking the right questions will cause them to "think" and will help them gain new insights into themselves and others. Asking questions will allow you gain a better understanding of the other person – how they think, how they make decisions, and how they see the world. It creates the opportunity for you to change their perspectives. Rather than simply answering their question or pointing them in the right direction, why not ask them what they think should be done? They may surprise themselves (and you) with their thought-process and you will create the opportunity to help them grow. Additionally, some people see the world in a certain way and find it difficult to see other points of view. By asking why they go about things a certain way or see things a certain way, you then have the ability to offer other perspectives and viewpoints. Since one of the roles of a leader is to develop others, this is an important skill to master.

By asking questions, you not only avoid misunderstandings, but help others to understand themselves and the world more fully.

References:

Roberts, A. E., (1987) *The Search for Leadership*, Highland Springs, Virginia.

(An older book, but this has been written by a Mason and deals specifically with the fraternity.)

Roberts. A. E. (1992) *Masonic Lifeline: Leadership*, Highland Springs, Virginia.

(By the same author. Short Masonic papers on a variety of topics related to Lodge Life and its members that Brother Roberts has collected by a variety of authors.)

Masonic Service Association *Leadership* -- small booklet with 7 short articles on Leadership.

Some Random thoughts on Masonic Leadership – Alphone Cerza

What it takes to be a Leader – General Mark W. Clark

Leadership – Grand Lodge Manual, Ohio

Discovering and Motivating Leaders – Alphonse Cerza

Recognizing and “Growing” the Leader – Allen E. Roberts

The Essential ingredient – Conrad Hahn

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Covey, S. R. (1992) *Principle Centered Leadership*, Simon & Schuster,
New York.