

Leadership

The year I became Worshipful Master of my mother lodge Aurora Lodge #165, I was given a box of over 1000 small little leaflets of educational tid-bits neatly folded like our lodge notices (when they were printed) simple in style and form. There was no discernable order to them and ranged by year, mostly reprints of the early 1920's to late 2000's. They were education pieces called the "Short talk bulletin " some of you may remember them, they were published to by the Masonic Service Association of North America. I found one bulletin that caught my eye ... Volume 85 December 2007 number 12 titled "Leadership - it must be given away." This paper was presented at the conference of Grand Master's - held in Portland Oregon - February 2007 by Brother Vern Wertz Past Grand Master of Oregon – He was speaking directly to Grand Master's but the ideas expressed can hold true for any Mason that is placed in a leadership position.

I will read a few excerpts that I feel are relevant to what we stand for and why we are Freemasons.

"... we should take the lamp of truth and walk among our neighbors. We should continue to search for those good men who obey God and serve his children, we should look for men with fire in the heart and wings on their feet who will show other good men the pathway of brotherly love and that what we call freemasonry. We must each one of us continue to lead in the advancement of our gentle craft. ... lead by setting the example lead by truly educating your brother and in the meaning of freemasonry . Lead by allowing others to make use of their God-given talents, some of the best brains in the world are yours to command some of the noble spirits some of the most inspirational teachers are all at your beck and call as a leader it is not your function to ignore these men and not make them passive instruments, dull and broken and useless rather you must inspire them to share their nature and their talents in the greatest arena possible."

What distinguishes great leaders from merely good ones. Is it IQ , technical skills or sociability? Leadership is about coping and understanding change. The greatest leaders set the direction, align people, and provide motivation. I believe the key to successful leaders should also include brotherly love, guided by emotional intelligence. Emotional Intelligence has a group of five specific skills that can be worked on at any point in your life. It can enable the best leaders to maximize their own performance and those that they lead. Emotional intelligence is understanding one self-awareness, knowing one's strengths and weaknesses your drives, values and how they impact on others.

Self-awareness is the first component of emotional intelligence to "know thy self "means having a deep understanding of one's emotions strengths, weaknesses needs and desires. People who have high degrees of self-awareness recognize how their feelings affect themselves and other people around them. Their performance in what they do is always being considered. Self-regulation is key for leaders and the people who are in control of their feelings and impulses they are able to create an environment of trust and fairness. They are more able to roll with the punches of change, as well they are able to suspend judgement and seek out information and understanding. The ability to say "no to impulses" to move forward, and not panic – that is true definition of emotional maturity. The third is motivation or drive, it is to succeed, to become better. Simply that drive is to achieve the expectations and then master them. Fourth and easily the most recognized is empathy, but is easily overlooked in society and in my opinion least understood in most societies today. I feel as Freemason we have high empathy and self- awareness of others. Ask yourself how do you show it - to our loved ones, our brothers and friends. Do you praise brothers for their work in lodge or do you feel praised? I feel we can do better at this; we need to improve

with coaching and mentoring and most importantly listening. Socially skilled people tend to have a wide circle of acquaintances. The core principle of teamwork and to live by, is the assumption that nothing important gets done alone. This is where networking together when the time for action comes is vital. When people are prepared, they can better effectively manage relationships tasks and duties. Affective strong relationships require optimism and control of emotions - affective team management and motivation of their peers is easier when people are listened to and understood. Self-regulation and controlling or redirecting disruptive impulses and moods is vital. It is important to listen and understand other people's emotional make up or social skills as well so that you can build better understanding and rapport. We are each are born with certain levels of emotional intelligence but learn over time, we can strengthen these abilities through persistence, practice, and feedback from colleagues, coaches, and brethren.

Why do we organize in teams or groups? Why in lodges and why through allegory and symbols? Organizing and leadership enables people to learn with the resources they have from and develop knowledge into power – To make the changes they want, to become better. Brothers and lodge officers offer support to the Worshipful Masters while he leads and instructs the lodge. You are there for mentorship and learning with each other. The relationship plays a key role in leadership and development of people both ways. Those who feel supported enjoy what they're doing and are more likely to go further and keep doing it.

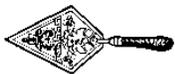
We can meet higher levels of understanding and goals working in teams together by tapping into the diverse range of resources of skills and knowledge of the multiple people that are brought together in our lodges. We develop new relationships with fellow brothers, lodges and concordant bodies that facilitate and deepen our commitment to the craft.

In conclusion Brother Vern Wertz sums Leadership up nicely...

“... being a leader is never easy ... how grateful I am that my life has been graced by so many good men, who without thought of recompense or desire for credit gave me the gift of freemasonry they give it freely willingly it came with no strings no demands only the hopes that I would receive it freely willingly and let it work a miracle in my life.,, and if you good men in this room would truly be the leaders of our gentle craft than you too must fan that glowing ember of greatness that lies within you Fan it into incandescence and then and then you must give it away.”

This my brothers is just another beautiful thing I have discovered and improved on in my life with Freemasonry.

Thank you for your time ...



WB Ted Fitch DEO