



LODGES DON'T MAKE MASONS

By Joe Ferrell

In our ritual, we are taught that truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue. This lesson is repeated in word and symbol throughout the craft — from the use of the square to prove if a corner is true, to the introduction of light so one may see what was obscured. It is also implicit in the relationship between a new Mason and his Intender, his mentor, whose role requires him to provide, more than anything else, clarity.

Clarity isn't listed as a precept, nor is it found among the domestic virtues, or anywhere else in our ritual and lectures; because clarity is not an adoptable quality. Clarity results from discarding the superfluous in favor of the actual; it is the effect of learning to distinguish between the fanciful and the factual.

Providing clarity to another brother — or anyone for that matter — is one of the most rewarding tasks a Mason may undertake. We are given the opportunity to do so in our relationships with other brothers, especially those relationships where we act as a mentor.

It's not the ornaments of Masonry that form a true Mason. It's not the symbols or the jewels or even ritual that transforms us from a good man into a great man. It has always been, and always will be, the quiet and generous counsel we receive over time from a particular brother.

Herb was the district deputy for my lodge when I first joined Freemasonry. Right off the bat, he said, "I will mentor you." Herb always pushed me into leadership positions, and we became more than brothers. We became brother friends. Thanks to his mentorship, I became a different person. The rituals made more sense to me. I understood in praxis what love truly is.

We should understand that the core of Freemasonry is based on relationships; that Brotherly love is more than just words. It's mentorship and a deep desire to see our Masonic values crystallize in someone's else's heart. If we don't understand this core clarity, our meanings, our rituals and our purpose will fade away. Our lessons won't

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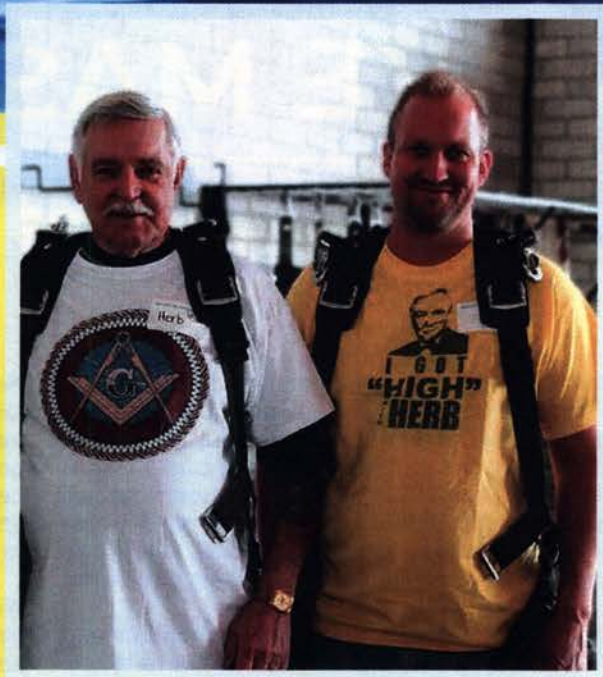
be perpetuated, we won't have more instructors and our traditions and values won't be heard anymore.

Think about your journey into the craft. Close your eyes and try to recall the sound of your mentor's voice as he patiently guided you into a clearer understanding of the fraternity and its symbols. It is not an exaggeration to say his words live on in your heart, that his wisdom and direction helped form the heart of your life as a Mason.

Think about the brethren in your lodge, especially those new brothers crossing the threshold from darkness into light. That transition is meant to be literal, not metaphoric. Our job—your job—is to receive them with warmth and brotherly love, to take them under your care, and be their teacher. Their intender. Their mentor. It is this ongoing conversation you'll have with a brother, a vital conversation that will last the rest of your life. It is this conversation between millions of brothers that forms the true center of Freemasonry.

It is, after all, not the lodge that makes Masons. The lodge makes members, masons make masons.

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Herb and Joe

