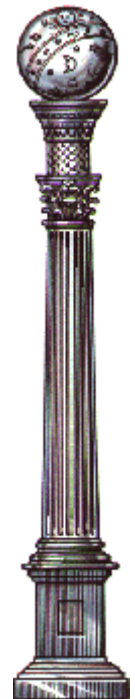
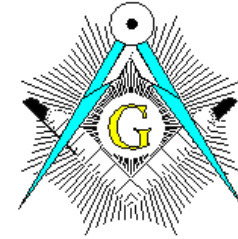


*Grand Lodge of South Dakota
A. F. & A. M.
Guide for the Mentoring of
New Masons*



**Developed by the South Dakota Commission on Masonic
Education. Douglas C. McFarland, Chairman**

Mentoring the New Mason

The Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines *mentor* as "a trusted counselor or guide." Mentors are critically important individuals in the workplace, academic institutions, places of worship, recreational activities, within the Masonic fraternity, and in countless other situations where an individual must gain knowledge in any given discipline. Mentors are expected to advise, guide, encourage, and inspire the student (also referred to as a protégé or apprentice). The effective mentor must be able to give of themselves, be competent, confident, prepare himself for the sessions, exhibit a positive attitude and be respectful of others. Not every well-versed individual is capable of being an effective mentor. The potential mentor must have that inner desire to diligently follow through with this responsibility and derive personal satisfaction from the successes of their students. This is the reward of an effective and caring mentor.

Prior to or immediately following the initiation of a new Mason, the Master of the Lodge should appoint a mentor for the candidate. This appointment should not be done hastily or without regard for the skills and personality of the potential mentor. A poor choice of mentor may lead to loss of interest by the candidate, lack of progress in the degrees, and loss of good candidates. Masonic ledger books have many entries of men who completed the EA Degree and went no further. How much of this was due to poor mentoring? We will never know for sure, but poor mentoring likely had a role in many of these losses. On the other hand, men who have

distinguished themselves as leaders and "workmen in the quarries" are likely products of effective mentoring in their early years.



Goals:

Soon after the initiation, the mentor and new EA should get together for their first session, if they haven't already met prior to the degree. Provided that the candidate underwent a proper investigation and visitation with well-versed Lodge members, he should have a pretty good idea what is in store for him. There are three major areas that the mentor needs to focus on during the ensuing sessions.

As the sessions progress, the mentor should first **come to know his student on a personal level**. This includes his family, job, hobbies, and his short- and long-term aspirations, both professionally and personally. This information will strengthen the relationship and also help the mentor in determining his approach to the education of the student. This is a 2-way street. The student must also get to know his mentor and learn what his priorities and aspirations are. The mentor is an "ambassador" for the fraternity, demonstrating in both words and actions the true Masonic philosophy. In fact, whether we recognize it or not, each of us serve as ambassadors for Freemasonry and will be considered as representative examples (both good and bad) of the fraternity.

The second important task is to **work with the candidate to demonstrate proficiency** on the degree

work. There are different levels of proficiency that may be acceptable to the Master of the Lodge. This ranges from much abbreviated proficiency examinations as done with one-day festivals to the “traditional” or long-form proficiency catechism. Several years ago the Commission on Masonic Education developed proficiency documents designed to be used with the one-day festivals. These are available through the Grand Lodge Office. Other proficiency examinations include the short catechism of the South Dakota Standard Proficiency materials, with or without memorization of the obligation. It is the prerogative of the Master of the Lodge to determine what is acceptable. The student should be encouraged to tackle the traditional proficiency procedure, as this will give him a good background if he eventually wishes to advance through the officer chairs and participate in degree work. Not everyone has the ability (or inclination) to spend the time necessary for extensive memory work. In this case, abbreviated proficiency examinations may be appropriate.

The third task is to **provide a program of Masonic education to the new Mason**. While the memory work is an important part of this process, there is much more to Masonic education than recitation of the catechism and ritual. A principal function of Masonic education is to support and expand upon the lessons of our ritual. These lessons are essential for the development of the Masonic philosophy by the candidates.

Mentoring is not finished after the Master Mason proficiency examination is completed. Mentoring can and should be a life-long relationship. The ambitious new

Mason will engage additional mentors throughout his Masonic career.

One of the most valuable contributions a mentor can make to the fraternity is to pass on the names of exceptional new Brothers to their Lodge and Grand Lodge leadership. Encourage these Brothers to participate in leadership roles. It will not only enrich their Masonic experience but they will have opportunities to make meaningful contributions that will make a difference in their communities and in their lives. It goes without saying that our fraternity needs a steady flow of intelligent, ambitious, and talented leaders.



Educational Materials:

There is no shortage of good quality Masonic literature available for the student in Masonry. (There are also considerable amounts of poor, far-fetched, and unsubstantiated materials both in print and on internet sources.) There is likely no better source of educational information for candidates than the Standard Proficiency materials published by the Grand Lodge of South Dakota. Packets of this material are 3-hole punched and separated into sections for each of the 3 degrees. This material provides excellent explanations of each aspect of the degree work including the lessons imparted in the degrees, symbolism of the degrees and further background information. There are “quizzes” at the end of each section for the new Brother to test his

understanding of the material. Also included are copies of the short-form proficiency examinations.

It would be beneficial to the candidate to cover pages 1-5 of the EA chapter prior to any degree work. Packets containing the Proficiency Course material for the three degrees are available from the Grand Lodge office for \$5.00 each. (Note: Even “seasoned” Master Masons could benefit by reviewing this material. It is likely that they too will learn something new!)

The Fellowcraft chapter contains an essay entitled *Masonry in the USA* covering the historic development of the fraternity in this country. A second essay: *Masonry at the State Level* discusses Grand Lodge structure and duties of Grand Officers, while a third essay covers *Symbolism of the Fellowcraft Degree*. The Master Mason chapter includes essays on: *The Rights of a Master Mason*, *The Responsibilities of a Master Mason*, and the *Symbolism of the Master Mason Degree*.

Another excellent source of Masonic educational materials is *The Craft and Its Symbols* by Allen E. Roberts. This hard-bound book is divided into three chapters, one for each degree. It is available from the Southern California Research Lodge, F. & A. M. for \$6.60 plus \$2.50 postage. (PO Box 939; Ashland, OR 97520-0032; Voice: (541) 488-8788; e-mail: Scrlfam@aol.com). Membership in the SCRL includes an excellent monthly newsletter on Masonic education, availability of discounted Masonic books and the Entered Apprentice Program. The Entered Apprentice Program allows members to receive free copies of *The Craft and Its Symbols* to present to newly initiated Masons on behalf

of the SCRL. The new EA also receives the monthly newsletter for 6 months. The web site for the SCRL is:

<http://www.calodges.org/scrl/>

Between the South Dakota Grand Lodge Proficiency Course packet and *The Craft and Its Symbols*, the new Mason has at his fingertips much of the fundamental Masonic education materials needed to develop into a well-versed Brother.



Suggested Topics for Discussion:

Shortly following each Degree, it is important for the mentor to review with the new Mason what transpired during the Degree. The mentor should assure himself that his student understands the symbolism of our ancient and beautiful ceremonies. Soon after the Degree, the student will need to read through the Grand Lodge proficiency material to reinforce the lessons. Review of the degree work with the student should be done at the beginning of the first session following each degree. Then move on to the catechism and memory work.

The South Dakota Ritual-Monitor (a.k.a. The Blue Book), is available from the Grand Lodge office or Lodge Secretary for \$8.00. The student may purchase this following the Master Mason Degree. The mentor can provide photocopies of the pertinent pages for the catechism (enlarging them by 200% is very helpful!).

The current Blue Book has the esoteric work in code, i.e. the first letter of each word is printed only. The one letter code is not easy for the new Mason to follow along with until he is very familiar with the catechism and ritual. The student will likely ask why he cannot have a complete written out copy of the work to make it much easier to learn the work. Good question. However, current Grand Lodge rules only permit one copy of the written-out work available to each lodge. With good reason, we do not want a lot of copies “floating around” and getting into the wrong hands. If the mentor or the student is stuck on a few words, give the Lodge Secretary or Master of the Lodge a call (whoever is in possession of the written-out work) and ask for the “lost words.”

There is an additional tool that can be used to learn the work. This is a ritual/monitor published by W. W. Daggett in the early 20th century and was used in some states. The great advantage of the “Daggett” is that this code uses several key letters in each word instead of just the first letter. It is much easier to use for learning the ritual. There are copies in many lodges and can be photocopied enlarged (suggest 200%). To give an example comparing the 2 methods, consider the following: #1: M b, I n h t p o p y m r h vs. #2: My br, I nw hv th plsr of prsntg y m r h. The first is from the Blue Book and the second is from the Daggett. They both are in code, but the Daggett is much easier to learn from. Once the catechism is learned, the Blue Book will work very well. As there were several versions of the Daggett published over the years, it is important to check and

make any necessary adjustments to comply with current South Dakota ritual.

Ask that the student bring up any questions at any time during the sessions. Keep it fun and keep it moving. Aside from the more mainstream items covered in the mentoring sessions, there are many other appropriate and interesting topics that can, and should be, discussed. The following are just a few topics that come to mind that might be interesting to delve into:

Current movies with Masonic references – any facts to them or is it all fiction?

Historical roots of Freemasonry

Freemasonry and religion

Why is religion and politics not discussed in Lodge?

History of our local lodge

My neighbor asks me what Masons do – how do I answer this and perhaps get him interested in joining us?

Masonic Knights Templar and the Knights Templar of the Crusades- any connection?

Prominent Masons in the U.S. and locally

What are Moon Lodges?

What is the Regius Poem?

What is contained in the Grand Lodge Constitution and By-Laws?

What is the Grand Lodge, who belongs to it, and what do they do?

What is a lodge Charter?

What are Traditional Observance Lodges and European Concept Lodges?



Masonic Jurisprudence and the Landmarks of Freemasonry:

The structure of Freemasonry and its governance is quite different than that of state legislatures, schools, societies, clubs, churches or other organizations. Therefore, Freemasonry cannot follow traditional Parliamentary Procedures as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order.

To begin to understand Masonic rules of order it is necessary to review the Landmarks of Freemasonry. These landmarks are of such importance that they are listed in Article I of the Constitution of our Grand Lodge where it is clearly stated that “...*insofar as they are Landmarks, it is not in the power of any man, or body of men to make innovation....*” Additionally, in the charge delivered at the installation of the Master, he is ordered to “...*cling to the old Landmarks, and be sternly opposed to their infringement.....*” There are 25 landmarks and the student should be familiar with all of them.

The Masonic Lodge is governed by a Master, and the term “Master” means exactly what it says. The Master has a greater prerogative in conducting communications (meetings) than is generally seen in other organizations. Although it does occur in some Lodges, it is improper to “call for the question” of a topic under discussion by any member, as it would limit the Master’s power to control debate.

Except in issues where he is at odds with Grand Lodge laws or the by-laws of his own lodge, the Master of the Lodge controls the lodge. There is no appeal from his decision to the lodge, he can close debate at his pleasure, and he is responsible to the Grand Master to keep the lodge running harmoniously. A Master of a lodge that permitted his lodge to operate irresponsibly could be brought up on charges by the Grand Master and charged with un-Masonic conduct.



Deportment in Lodge

The first few minutes after the new EA is seated in the Lodge following his degree work is a very special time. The Brothers will welcome him, he will have a chance to say a few words, and greetings will be brought from a representative of the Grand Lodge and Grand Master.

This is also the time to introduce the new Brother to the formalities of lodge protocols. Have a well-versed Brother explain these protocols to him. The Brother should sit next to the new EA so he will not feel awkward during the closing ceremony and to help him feel more comfortable during the following degrees.

The major items to cover are:

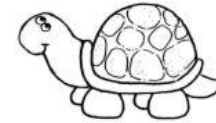
1. *the attitude of prayer*
2. *“So mote it be” and its meaning*
3. *stepping down “on the level”*
4. *flag etiquette*
5. *standing to be recognized by the W. Master*

6. *addressing the W. Master*
7. *addressing other Brothers within the Lodge*
8. *entering or retiring from a Lodge in session*
9. *not to cross between the 3 Great Lights and the W. Master in the East*
10. *escort of candidates vs. Master Masons*
11. *right angle turns about the Lodge*
12. *1, 2, & 3 gavel raps – what do they mean?*

It is best to review these protocols during the first mentoring sessions. The new EA has had a lot of information coming at him “fast and furious” and it is difficult (probably impossible) to remember everything that happened during the night of his EA Degree.

A few words need to be said about clothing and appearance at lodge meetings and lodge activities. Much may be noted about what a Mason wears to lodge. If a lodge meeting is considered something special, then one should dress accordingly.

Among the more important points, if not the most important point to stress to the new Mason in explaining the business of the lodge is the following words from the Senior Warden as he describes his duties: “.....*harmony being the strength and support of all institutions, more especially of ours.*” If the Brothers of the lodge would keep these beautiful and inspirational words in mind, and live up to them, the lodge will more than likely be successful, vibrant, and a shining example of what Freemasonry is all about.



Moving Along the Poky Student

Some new Entered Apprentices seem to hit a snag in their advancement through the Degrees of Masonry. There are obviously many reasons that this may occur. Some we cannot do anything about but others we can do something about. Some of these reasons are listed below, but there are certainly other situations that can exist.

- a. *Memory work appears to be daunting*
- b. *Time constraints from their jobs*
- c. *Poor understanding of what was expected of them to advance through the degrees*
- d. *Masonry was not what they expected it to be*
- e. *Incompatibility with the mentor assigned*
- f. *Increased family pressure, ex. young children, unsupportive wife, family commitments*
- g. *Financial issues with the dues and fees*
- h. *Masonic Degree work was seen as a stumbling block to their joining the Shrine, which was their real goal*
- i. *Poor degree work which did not impress and inspire them*
- j. *Felt unwelcome among the Brothers*
- k. *Had to leave town for a new job*

These reasons for not advancing can be divided into 4 categories.

1. Reasons *c,d,f, and g* are the result of a poor job by the investigation/visitation committee. These items should have been discussed and made clear to the

prospect and his family. These items are covered in the South Dakota *Guidelines for Candidate Investigations*.

2. Reasons *a, b, e, i,* and *j* are the Lodge's problems that need to be fixed. (More on this later)
3. Reason *h* is a problem with the candidate, as he was not frank with his sponsors and the investigation committee.
4. Reason *k* is the fault of no one – this happens often. The proper response would be for the Lodge Secretary to contact the Grand Lodge or Lodge Secretary in the town the candidate is moving in to and actively work to help him transition to a new lodge. A phone call and letter of introduction for the new arrival will smooth the transition and make him feel welcome in his new town. It is likely that this will greatly help in his move because he will now have a number of new friends.

Let us explore what can be done with problem reasons *a, b, e, i,* and *j*.

1. “*a*” refers to a new candidate who is having trouble with learning the proficiency work. As stated in the *Goals* section above, there are different levels of proficiency that may be acceptable to the Master of the Lodge. Demonstrating proficiency in the traditional manner as our fathers and grandfathers have done is a great “feather in one’s cap.” However, this is not going to be possible for some candidates to accomplish. This is why there are different protocols for

demonstrating proficiency. If the mentoring hits a snag because of this, then consider the alternative methods. There are probably few remaining lodges that would refuse to advance a good candidate because he could not undergo the long-form catechism. The bottom line is to be flexible.

2. “*b*” refers to time constraints from job and family obligations that might have been made more clear during the committee visitation. But now, we need to deal with this. Again, we need to be flexible in accommodating the candidate’s schedule. Try to find times during the day or evening that can work for both the mentor and candidate. Mentors are generally busy as well. If scheduling is a big problem, speak with the Master of the Lodge about securing an additional mentor for this candidate. Offer short-form proficiency alternatives if this would help in his advancement. Provided that the Investigation Committee did their job properly, the candidate should be well aware of the time commitment necessary for advancement.
3. “*e*” refers to the incompatibility of the mentor-student relationship. Individuals have different styles of handling and tackling projects. We have all seen personality conflicts arise over one thing or another and it is bound to occur with the mentoring

procedure from time to time. The best course of action is to change mentors – and soon. The Master of the Lodge should be informed of the problem and he should make another assignment. In fact, the original mentor may have several suggestions of new mentors, as he would have a good feel for the disposition of the candidate and who he might work well with. Additionally, there is nothing that prohibits a mentor from being secured from a neighboring lodge that might be a “good fit” for the candidate.

4. “i” refers to poor degree work performance which failed to impress the candidate. This candidate was likely “built up” on the impressive symbolism of the degree work and then was let down by poor work. The lodge has no excuse for this. If the lodge is incapable of putting on good strong degree work, then other arrangements need to be made. Are there neighboring lodges that can do the work in an impressive and dignified manner? The District Master can help in securing degree workers to provide a memorable experience for the candidate. Sometimes “car load degree teams” can be put together to put the work on in the candidates home lodge. Or the candidate can be brought to another lodge for the work to be done, perhaps along with a candidate of their own. These are generally fun nights for

everyone and serve to build Masonic camaraderie between neighboring lodges.

- i. Another question that comes to mind: Is the lodge capable of doing the degree work, but is not willing to put forth the effort to practice the parts and do a good job?
 - ii. Currently, at least several one-day festivals are scheduled each year with the permission of the recent Grand Masters. The degree work is generally done very well, but the follow-up Masonic education needs to be done by the lodges in order for candidates to fully appreciate this meaningful and life-changing experience that he has undergone.
5. “j” is the situation where the candidate is brought to lodge and is largely ignored. This happens more than we like to admit. Every candidate and Mason that walks through the door of the lodge should immediately feel the friendship and brotherly love that we claim to hold in such high regard. Some lodges assign greeters to welcome everyone as they come through the door. This is an excellent idea. Help the older Brothers with their coats, ask the Brothers about their family, and make them genuinely happy that they decided to leave the comfort of their home and their

families to meet with their Masonic Brothers. The bottom line is that there is absolutely no excuse for this problem occurring in a Masonic Lodge.



Even More Light in Masonry - The York and Scottish Rites

Immediately following the Entered Apprentice obligation, the newly made Mason is asked what he most desires. His answer is: *Light*. Once again, following the Fellowcraft obligation he is asked the same question and his answer is: *More Light in Masonry*. And finally, after the Master Mason obligation his answer to this question is: *Further Light in Masonry*.

There is no better route to receiving *Even More Light in Masonry* than to join and become active in the York and Scottish Rites. The Rites are often referred to as the Universities of Freemasonry. The lessons of the Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason Degrees (collectively called the Craft Degrees) are expanded on within the Degrees of the Rites and give Masons a greater appreciation and understanding of the symbolism and deeper meaning of the philosophy of Freemasonry. If the mentor is not well versed in the activities of the Rites, he should ask well-versed members to assist him in introducing these organizations to the candidate.

Other Appendent and Allied Organizations

Probably the most “high profile” organization with Masonic membership ties is the **Shrine**. The Shrine has done a wonderful job in showcasing their philanthropy of supporting their many Children’s Hospitals across the country. The candidate should be made aware of the work of the Shriners. Another prominent Masonic allied organization to discuss is the **Order of the Eastern Star**. Again, if the mentor is not familiar with the allied organizations, he should enlist the help of others who are. South Dakota has several youth groups affiliated with the Masonic fraternity, namely **The Order of De Molay** for boys, and the **Job’s Daughters** and **Rainbow Girls** for young ladies. These wonderful organizations focused on youth development need to be introduced to the candidates as well.

The allied adult and youth organizations must not be looked on as competitors for the Masonic Brother’s time and efforts. A successfully mentored and productive Mason will be an asset to the whole Masonic family as well as his community. It is common for individuals to find some niche within the several organizations to which they belong and focus much of their efforts in those endeavors. However, we all benefit from this involvement because it continues to spread the goals and philosophy of our fraternity.

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