

GROWING THE LEADER

MORE LIGHT IN MASONRY (V): GROWING THE LEADER by Allen E. Roberts

"How do we find leaders?" is constantly being asked. Wise men know that no organization can long exist unless it develops new leaders.

Before this question can be answered, some soul-searching is required. First, we must determine whether or not the leadership of the organization REALLY wants to find leaders. Does the leadership REALLY want men who just might be better leaders than their superiors? Does the leadership really want to take the time, patience, and perseverance to train new leaders? Does the leadership really want to spend the money necessary to produce the leaders of tomorrow?

There are two types of leaders in every organization: the Constructive and the Obstructive. The Constructive Leader will answer each of the foregoing questions in the affirmative. He will take pleasure from achieving with people. He will surround himself with "strong" people and assist them in every way possible to become better than himself. He recognizes that the world is changing, socially and economically. He realizes that differing skills are needed to build the organization. He knows that leaders aren't born - they have to be grown; so he grows them.

The Obstructive Leader uses people to increase his own prestige. He isn't about to admit that any subordinate might know more about anything than he does. Such a leader takes the pats on the back and the credit, if there are any. The subordinate will get the knocks when things go wrong.

In Freemasonry, the principal leaders-the chairman of the boards-are the Grand Masters and the Worshipful Masters. They must make the final decisions for everything done by their Grand Lodge or Lodges. They must get things done through other people. Everything they attempt must utilize the human element. Because of this, they must have a working knowledge of the principles of management.

Why use the principles of management for Freemasonry? Isn't this a non-profit organization? Not exactly. Every organization must show a "profit" or it will not long exist. Profit in a business, to put it simply, is money earned less costs or expenses. In a non-profit association it is BENEFITS DERIVED LESS UNWANTED CONSIDERATIONS.

The principles of management, which are actually the principles of leadership, can be enumerated as:

- Planning
- Goal setting
- Organizing

- Communicating

- Controlling

We have covered to some extent the first two, planning and goal setting, in earlier articles in this series. We have covered organizing and staffing briefly, especially when we discussed the need of teamwork. We will go into all of these subjects more deeply in future Short Talks. Here we'll be touching upon these principles as we discuss leadership.

Where are we going to find these leaders and potential leaders we need? The answer is simple. Within the organization itself! We already have the nucleus all around us. I believe it is safe to say the Freemasonry has more leaders of industry, education, religion, politics, labor, and professions than does any other organization in the world. We just haven't been growing them in Freemasonry as we should.

Too often we ignore the potential leader we have close to us. This was graphically illustrated when my wife and I had dinner with a Grand Master of a neighboring jurisdiction. I extolled the many Masonic virtues of one of his members, whom I'll call George. He looked puzzled and finally admitted that he didn't know George, but he would do some checking when he returned home. If George was as good as I claimed, he would put him on his education committee.

Two weeks later I received a letter from George. He had been made a member of the education committee. From that day to this, George has been recognized as one of that jurisdiction's most knowledgeable and hardworking Masons.

We'll look at why we let men like George get away from us shortly. First, let's look at what makes a Constructive Leader. Unless we know how to be constructive in our leadership, it won't help to find potential leaders. The men we have won't stay with us very long if we take an obstructive approach.

THE CONSTRUCTIVE LEADER WILL ALWAYS:

- Give recognition

- Encourage creativity

- Request assistance

- Accept blame

- Give credit

- Seek advice

- Practice participation

Man must have recognition. We've said this before; we'll probably say it again. The forefathers of today's Freemasons knew this. That's why the Senior Warden was, and is, charged to "Pay the Craft their wages, if any be due." How often this is recited, but ignored. In every Lodge on any given evening there are members sitting along the sidelines who deserve "Master's wages". Seldom do they receive this recognition from the Senior Warden, or anyone else.

Surveys have proven that man's creativity is being wasted. In, his avocations he uses less than 20% of the creativity that he is endowed with. The Constructive Masonic Leader will utilize as much of this wasted ability as possible. He will make him an important part of the team. By doing so this man will make the leader reach heights he didn't believe possible.

As Freemasons we are working with a class of men who will not and cannot be driven. They are on the higher levels of human behavior. They will not be ordered to do anything, but they can be requested to help. The Constructive Leader knows this. He also knows that once they have agreed to help, they should be left alone to do the job.

When things go wrong - and they will - the Constructive Leader accepts the blame. He then tries to determine why they went wrong and what can be done in the future to make them go right.

The Constructive Leader will always see that the man who does a good job, or has submitted an idea, gets the credit. By giving credit where credit is due, this leader will rise far above the crowd. He will be doing it on the willing shoulder of loyal subordinates.

To seek advice is the mark of an outstanding leader. No one man can possibly know all the answers to anything. As everything grows more and more complex, the individual will have to seek advice frequently. This information will be carefully weighed and will assist in reaching the final decision about what should be done.

Participation - Teamwork - is put to work constantly by the Constructive Leader. He has found that participation is the only way for a group to reach a goal. Orders and commands will achieve nothing.

There are many signs to watch for to discover the "Georges" in our Lodges. Some of these signs are often overlooked, because they aren't what we've been taught to look for. The potential leader is frequently the fellow we've been warned against. He could look too much like a trouble-maker. Actually, he isn't. But, because he's eager to do a top-notch job; he may appear overly aggressive.

THE POTENTIAL LEADER:

- Desires criticism
- Seeks responsibility
- Is creative; has ideas

- Solves problems
- Works toward goals
- Initiates action
- Wants to be independent
- Adjusts to reality

Such a future leader wants his work evaluated. He wants constructive criticism - not praise. He's tougher on himself than any boss could ever be. He's continually trying to improve.

Responsibility is something the potential leader will seek. He'll try to find the jobs that have a certain amount of risk to them. He wants an opportunity to be creative - to work toward a goal that he has helped to set. The tougher the job, the better. It gives him a chance to use his initiative and his creativity.

Trying to solve knotty problems he considers fun, not work. The tougher the problem, the harder he'll work to put the pieces together. In doing this, as with everything, he'll seek advice. Once he gets into the job, he wants to be left alone to complete it. The "book" may point out the shortest route to Rome, but he says, "What difference does it make if I go to California, then to New York, then to St. Louis, and from there to Rome, as long as I get there within the allotted time?"

The potential leader will plan long and short range goals for his life-and will help his superiors plan theirs, if they will let him. These goals will be flexible enough so that he can adjust to reality.

When we sum up the qualities of the potential leader, we find that he is a darn good man to have on our side. When he's on our team, he'll make us look better than we really are. We certainly shouldn't pass him up just because he's not a "book" or strict rule follower.

You will note that I said the potential leader finds solving knotty problems fun. This word "fun" is the key to the success of every Lodge. Actually, it is the key to the success of every organization, profit and non-profit alike.

Here's what Peter Prior, Managing Director of H. P. Bulmer, Ltd., wrote: "Business is fun. Companies that generate excitement about what they are doing are more successful than those that don't."

A young lady, 15, in trouble with the law, was asked to define the qualities of a leader. This is what she wrote:

"To me a leader is many things. Here's the things I think a leader really is. He is strong, but not by force. Leaders usually know how to make decisions. They know where the real fun is. A leader helps to make one's mind wonder what to do next. One who leads usually is ahead of the

rest. He knows where and when to expect trouble. He may be experienced, bull-headed and even smart. To me, that's what a leader is. To most he's considered to be brutal, sometimes violent, and quick."

This young lady had never been exposed to management seminars, workshops on leadership, or the behavioral scientists. Yet, she has described many of the qualities brought out by the trainers of leaders. She adds one thing, though, that few teachers ever mention. She claims `a leader "knows where the real fun is."

FUN! That's one of the big answers to many of our leadership problems. If our job isn't fun, then it's drudgery. We'll go to it morning after morning for only one reason. It puts the bread and butter (or margarine) on the table and keeps a roof over our heads. But there is no such compulsion to attend a Masonic Lodge or a Masonic function.

FUN! That's what we've got to have in Freemasonry. We've got to make it something to enjoy. Now, I don't mean undignified tomfoolery. I mean a sharing of philosophical values in such a way that it leaves everyone with a sense of well-being. As Brother Conrad Hahn once expressed it, "Masons should radiate the joy of wisdom." This can come from knowledgeable Masonic speakers who have, with a little humor, made us appreciate Freemasonry more. It could be a song fest; a panel discussion; a social hour or "harmony", as our Scottish Brethren call it. It can take many directions.

The serious and well performed degree work is fun. When properly done, it leaves us with a definite sense of happiness. Its well-known theme of victory over death, the development of man from youth, should continually make our hearts swell with pride in the teachings of the greatest fraternal organization known to man.

FUN! That's one of the reasons I've emphasized the need for TEAMS rather than the conventional committees. Teamwork is fun. Each member has an opportunity to share his knowledge with his fellows. It helps each man to grow into a leader.

Freemasonry IS fun! It was designed so by our "ancient brethren". In those Lodges where this concept is followed, there is growth because there is fellowship. These Lodges' have no problem with attendance, with excellent degree work, with community relations. They are growing in strength. And they are growing leaders.

According to many psychologists, industry and schools too often use the lord-serf, or cattle baron approach to education. The belief that one man knows everything, a few know a little, but the masses know nothing, is almost as prevalent today as it was a hundred years ago. This is definitely the obstructive approach to education. It prevents growth; it represses creativity.

This relationship, where the baron tells his foreman what he wants done and the foreman forces his men to do it, will no longer succeed, It never has in Freemasonry. Frequently the workers know more than the boss; the students, the professor; the member, the officer. Boredom will set in. The system, or the Lodge, disintegrates, or at best, stagnates.

The Constructive Leader will search for the men he wants to be the leaders of tomorrow. He will do everything within his power to grow them. He will not use the cattle baron approach. He will endeavor to utilize the creativity that will be found all around him. He will not retard men - he will grow them. He will do it by sharing the vast amount of knowledge that is available to everyone today.

One of the basic goals of every Masonic Lodge should be the creation of an atmosphere in which each member can find himself. And each member will find himself if he is given an opportunity to constructively help his Brothers. He will then be fulfilling one of his basic needs-the need to be wanted.

A Lodge is a living, breathing organization, because it is made up of vibrant men. It has to grow. And it will grow, either forward or backward. Obstructive leadership will hold it back. Constructive leadership will carry it forward. The individual Freemason will decide which way his Lodge is to go.

Our Lodges need each of us if they are to remain in existence. If we will use the Constructive - the Masonic - approach, there is no limit to the heights our Lodge can reach. They will grow because we'll be continually growing leaders.