

# MOTIVATING THE MASON AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN

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*This Short Talk Bulletin has been adapted from a paper presented to the Southwestern Masonic Conference by Right Worshipful Brother Howard when he was Deputy Grand Master in 1972.*

Howard Hill, the famous bow hunter, says that unless you know the habitat and the nature of the game you hunt you are not hunting at all, you're just walking in the woods. Our discussion will include some background in the habitat of citizenship and some discussion of the nature of Masonry and the principles of motivation, or else we're just talking in the woods.

Along with the word 'motivation', I've been thinking of another word, and this word is 'motivator'. Both words come from the Latin 'motivus' and both words mean 'motion or movement'. When we think of a motivator we think of someone who is capable of generating an action within him and then cause others to move around him. A motivator is always where the action is, because the motivator causes the action that surrounds him.

Psychologists tell us that 94% of us just sit around and wait for something to happen, while 6% of population are the motivators that make the something happen for us. What moves the motivator? What is this thing called motivation that sets him on fire with such a spontaneous combustion that he causes others to burn, too? Let's say that its imagination, or let's say it is determination to reach those goals which he himself considers a success in life. Or, let's say he is a dreamer and that he dreams of things as they could be and something inside says; "Why not?" Then, something says; "Why not now?"

The ability of a motivator and his energy are not as important as the excitement that is in him, because when people become excited others around them get excited, too, whether it be at a football game, a church revival, or in a Lodge meeting. But the dreams of the motivator can be good, or the dreams of the motivator can be bad. And while the dreams of our forefathers who founded this free nation were good, the dreams of the Communists can destroy our free world.

Masonry is the stuff from which good dreams come. It dreams of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Men; and it dreams of law and order, and good citizenship in state, community and nation. No one seriously believes that Masonry has a monopoly on good citizenship. But the Masonic dream became the American dream as the early Masons in this nation faced the problems of a wild frontier. But they had imagination and they had motivation. They had motivation for law and order; and they had motivation for better living in their community. These early pioneer Masons became the motivators to establish free schools, free churches and Freemasonry wherever they lived. This is our inheritance from the past and we are proud of it, because no citizen in history ever 'had it so good' as we here in America, today, and even though America has its faults, since its citizens are human, let us not forget that this is earth we live on and that our country is the best that men have ever devised.

The Masonic dream is the best dream for Masons tonight, and if enough Masons will dream, it can stay as the American dream for tomorrow. But, to maintain freedom we still need the motivations that our forefathers had. We still need to be motivators like our forefathers were, and we still need the dedication to stand up and be counted as our fathers did.

The habitat of citizenship involves all people living within our country or community of government, the young, the old, the rich, the poor, the Mason, and the non-Mason. All citizens receive benefits from society, and all citizens owe a debt of obligation for the benefits they have received. In America we say that we live in a free society. We say that we are free to make our own decisions. But a free society depends, for the sake of its freedom, on whether its citizens will behave in such a manner that their actions are considerate of other people. In America we operate from a sense of pride in the things that are good for all people. We operate from a certain feeling of patriotism, or love of country in return for the privileges of being free citizens in a free nation.

If we were asked to pay our debt to America we would all become bankrupt, because so many good things have happened to us because of our American citizenship that we will always be in debt to our country, and this alone, should motivate any Mason as a private citizen.

As Masons we recognize the foundation of the American way of life to begin in the family unit. This is our first duty of citizenship--to our family, and if Masonry is to effectively motivate its persons and members as private citizen, it must start with the family unit. How about some family gatherings? Not just family Lodge suppers and entertainment, but special family gatherings so that everyone can learn some of the history and some of the purposes of Masonry, and so that Masons can learn from their own families what is needed in their community to make their community a better place for family living. These special family gatherings can take as many shapes and forms as imagination can produce.

We talk about a 'generation gap'. There should never be this type 'generation gap' in the circle of Masonry. If there is, then our family meetings can help solve it, and Masons can, within their family group, become motivated to assist youth in either DeMolay, Rainbow or many others to the needs of an individual community.

The second duty of citizenship involves those things which strengthens our local community and makes it a better place for ourselves and our families to live. It is an old truth that when you brag on someone he will do his best to try and repeat it. Lodges can motivate by programs of appreciation for Masons who are good community leaders, from City Council to Baseball Coaches; from School Board Members to Animal Shelter Workers; and any other thing that a citizen is doing to directly contribute to the betterment of his community. These are all high-pressure, non-salaried jobs and these Masons show an unselfish dedication to work free when many other citizens 'pass the buck'. They are called upon time after time to serve their community and too often they are criticized for being 'a clique' and trying to run things in their own way, but the hearts of Masons are with them as they practice out of the Lodge those things that they have been taught to do while they were in it.

There is another side of this motivating process, and that is that 'birds of a feather flock together', and these good Masonic citizens, who are serving on School Boards and committees can attract others to become Masons, too. This is how Masonry transfers hard-hearted citizens into softhearted brothers through these personal communications. And then, these other private citizens, a Masonic instructed people can become better citizens, too.

Masonry is non-political and it has existed under King, Prince and Potentate. None of our teachings, ever stressed one form of government or the other, but century after century, and year after year, within our walls we have taught the principles of democracy. It is a wonderful feeling to be able to support freedom for your country and still be involved with the principles of Masonry. There is nothing wrong with a Mason as a private citizen to ask another Mason, who is qualified, to seek a political office. It is good Masonry, and it is good for a Lodge program to discuss such things as a community hospital, the needs for a blood bank, etc. And then, it is just plain good citizenship for the member so instructed to support these things in their local community.

The ways and means to motivate Masons as private citizens are as endless as the imagination of the Master or of the Program Chairman. It is a matter of motivating through excitement, and the next problem is just of communication so others will know how best to serve in their community.

Thomas Jefferson wrote that men are happiest when they are serving mankind and gripped in the throes of achievement. This is true and Masonry is a magnificent preparation for community service. There is another thing that is true, and that is that success always occurs when opportunity meets a magnificent preparation. This is how our scientists got to the Moon in the first place, and this is how Masons can motivate Masons as private citizens.

We can plan programs to inform Masons of the needs of the community, we can recognize Masons for their effort in service, we can prepare our members to think Masonry in their daily lives and through Lodge instruction we can inform our new initiates and give them a magnificent preparation for a community service.

Archimedes, the great Greek mathematician, invented the lever. He said; "give me a place to stand and I'll move the world." Masonry gives us a place to stand. If we stand together as citizens we can certainly move this society of ours, because Masons are good citizens and Masons understand that it is not the individual nor the army as a whole, but the ever-lasting teamwork of every bloomin' soul.