WORKING WITH GOALS

MORE LIGHT in MASONRY (III): WORKING WITH GOALS by Allen E. Roberts

Not long ago I was a participant in a weeklong management seminar, which was opened by one of the instructors merely chatting for a few minutes. Then he asked the group to split in two. Some stood. Some continued sitting. Same walked toward the door. All were confused. Why'?

All had complete freedom to act. We weren't told who should do what. We were free to sit, stand, or walk. But, although there was freedom, there was no direction. We learned that freedom, something we all proclaim as a right, must have limitations or it will not work. Freedom without direction becomes frustrating permissiveness. With permissiveness come problems, problems that often end in chaos.

Many of us were disturbed by the apparent waste of valuable time. We were going around in circles, ending up where we started. For eight hours nothing was accomplished that could even remotely be considered constructive. It appeared that we were in for a hair-tearing week.

After dinner the session continued. My frustration became acute. "How much more time are we going to waste:" I asked, not too gently.

"Ah'" gleefully said one of the instructors; "One of us is disturbed. Says we're wasting time. What do the rest of you think of that?"

Fortunately, several of the others agreed. And there was more confusion while we tried to determine just how and why the time was being wasted.

"Isn't this how each of you manages his department? Don't you let each person decide for himself what he's going to do during the day? When questions are asked, don't all of you discuss them freely and openly?" asked the instructor.

"You must be kidding!" snapped one of the participants. "You know my boss, and you know darn well who brings up the questions and answers them!"

"I'm not sure that I do. Do you mean that the boss tells all of you what you will do and not do?"

It turned out that that was the situation. Few, if any, discussed anything freely and openly with the boss. What he said was the law. When he met with his staff, he told each cane what to do, when, and how.

"But I'd rather have it that way," countered one of the men, "than the way it has been going here for the past eight hours."

The instructor grinned: "You don't like all this freedom" Can't say that I blame you. Unlimited freedom has its drawbacks. But if we are to accomplish what we ought to, there must he freedom within limits. Those limits will he determined by laws, budgets, capabilities, and the other resources at our command. Now what do you think we ought to do so that you will feel that we've stopped wasting time?"

"We had better set a goal for this seminar or we'll he here for a month instead of a week!" For the next hour there was an open and free discussion as to what the goal should be. And during the discussion we found that we had learned a valuable lesson. Actually, the time had not been wasted. None of us would ever again forget that many hours are lost forever because goals are not determined early.

We also learned, although not that evening, that setting goals must be done through teamwork. For a goal to he reached there must be commitment. but commitment is an individual thing. No person can commit another to anything. when one person sets a goal, only one person, himself. is committed to try to achieve that goal.

Goals, to be meaningful and to have a chance of being reached fully. must he set through participation. Participation means that the members of the team and/or the lodge have complete trust in each other. With trust there will be free and open discussion. Each member will state his approval or objections without fear of ridicule, reprisal, or of losing a friend.

The discussion to set the goals will keep the purposes clear to all. Clarity will aid in establishing the methods to reach the goals. An open and free discussion will bring about a desire to share in achieving the objectives that have been set. No attempt is made to persuade a majority, nor is a vote taken. The team will reach a consensus of opinion.

Consensus is reached when all agree to work toward a given goal. It doesn't mean that all agree completely. One or two may have reservations, but not strong enough to oppose their teammates. This will he possible only if there is complete trust.

With trust will come freedom to express our opinions openly. It makes us understand that feelings are facts. This causes us to practice empathy - the art of putting ourselves in the other fellow's shoes.

To reach the best goals possible, we must learn to listen - really listen. This has been judged the most difficult part of communicating meaningfully. But we cannot possibly reach the best solution to our problems unless we listen to all sides. When we listen, we learn what the other fellow is thinking. What he thinks may he exactly what we need to reach a successful conclusion.

Somewhere I have read: "The fellow who says he's too old to learn new things probably always was!" The same phrase fits the man who claims he's too old to try something new.

Much the same argument is used by those who don't desire to work for Freemasonry. They claim the organization cannot change, or a "Landmark" will be violated. They actually

GUIDE 1

JUDGING TEAMWORK in OUR LODGE

GOALS

GOOD

Set through participation: clear to all; shared confused; by all: all committed to achieving, them

POOR

Determined by the "Leader"; diverse: conflicting; little or no interest for achieving, them

PARTICIPATION

GOOD

All get into discussion: all are really listened frequent to

POOR

A few dominate; few listened to: Interruptions

FEELINGS

GOOD

Frustrating atmosphere: Freedom of expression: of empathetic responses

POOR

Unexpressed: hidden: ignored; fear criticism: indifferent

DIAGNOSIS of TEAM PROBLEMS

GOOD

Problem, carefully diagnosed before action is proposed: remedies get at basic causes

POOR

Jump directly to remedial proposals: treat symptoms rather than basic causes

LEADERSHIP

GOOD

Provided by various members; distributed as needs, contribute arise; all feel free to volunteer services

POOR

Single person dominates; few anything; needs not met

DECISIONS

GOOD

Consensus sought and tested: differing, ideas few, appreciated and used to improve decision: commitment by when made. fully supported

POOR

Made by one man; agreed to by majority vote decides: no members

TRUST

GOOD

Complete trust by each member; each reveals Team what he would be reluctant to expose to others individually; respect and use responses; freely express negative reactions without reprisal or ridicule

POOR

Members of Team distrust one another are polite: careful; closed: guarded: listen superficially but inwardly reject what others say: fear criticism: are afraid to criticize others

CREATIVITY and GROWTH

GOOD

Team flexible in seeking new and better ways of reaching goals; individuals changing and growing: creative: imaginative; supportive

POOR

Members of Team in a rut; operate routinely; stereotyped; rigid in roles and thinking; not willing to try anything "new"; no progress believe the Constitutions of Freemasonry rigidly prohibit changes. Dwight L. Smith, Past Grand Master of Masons in Indiana, disagreed when he wrote.

"Freemasonry has never been static and cannot be so if it expects to fulfill its mission in a changing world. For Masonry is a part of the world and cannot escape from it. He who thinks our Craft can remain insulated against change and continue to be just as it was when grandfather took the work is living in a fool's paradise."

True, Freemasonry has never been static. It isn't today. There are many Lodges that are growing; there are others that are deteriorating. It is alarming to read in Masonic periodicals about the number of Past Masters who arc again serving as Worshipful Masters. This is a sign that goals are not being set, that we aren't growing the leaders that we need.

Unless goals are set, there will be stagnation or deterioration in the Lodges. This will hurt our Lodge, our members, our families, the Grand Lodge and even the image of Freemasonry throughout the free world. Without goals to aim for, our members will be as confused as we were in our management seminar. They will drift and fade away from the Lodge and the Fraternity.

The success or failure of businesses, churches, professions, and nonprofit organizations is determined by goals or by the lack of them. Where there has been growth, we find that realistic goals have been determined through participation. Everyone in the organization has had an opportunity to help set them. They are then able to see themselves as part of the whole - an important part. They are able to identify their personal goals within the goals of the organization.

Assuming that we are agreed that meaningful goals are necessary for the growth of our Lodges, let's look at methods for selecting them,

To set goals we must:

- Determine the purpose for which Freemasonry exists.

- Determine the responsibility of the Lodge to the Grand Lodge.

- Identify the leaders' roles.

- Identity the members' roles in the Lodge.

- Define the needs of the members.

- Determine the role. of the Lodge in the community.

- Follow a plan of action.

- Set standards and performance measurements.

The purpose for the existence of continuation Freemasonry is TO MAKE GOOD MEN BETTER. This is the consensus of opinion of hundreds of Masonry's top leaders as determined two years ago. All goals set should be designed to achieve this purpose.

In setting goals the leadership of the Lodge must determine its responsibility to the Grand Lodge. No general statements can be made concerning all Grand Lodges, because each is sovereign. Each determines its own rules, regulations, laws, ritual, aims, and objectives. The leaders of a constituent Lodge should know what the Grand Lodge requires. They will usually find that there's a great deal of freedom in which the Lodge can act.

The February 1972 Short Talk Bulletin explained the role of the leader in solving some of the problems of the Lodge. It pointed out how to meet some of the needs of the members. It showed how to follow a plan of action.

While defining problems we learn what goals need to he set in order to solve the problems. Without goals the problems will remain. They will get worse the longer they remain unresolved. There will continue to be a conflict between the members and the purpose of Freemasonry, TO MAKE GOOD MEN BETTER.

Standards and measurements must be set up by the group to provide the control needed to reach the goals. These should include what is expected to be achieved, when it is to be completed, and who is to do the jab. The results can be measured against what other Lodges are doing, what our members think of the changes, and whether or not we finished what we set out to do.

Let's assume that we set as a goal "Better Degree Work." We've got to determine when we want this better degree work-immediately, next week, in two months, or a year from now. We'll meet with disaster if we don't set a deadline.

We must then decide who's going to instruct the ritualists. Leaving it to everyone means no one will do it. How it's done should be left to those who are to do the job.

As time goes on we want to know how we're doing. We can find thin out by asking, by observing, and by the enthusiasm, or luck of it, of the members. We can bring in outside observers (in this case the Grand Lecturer or one of his assistants) to let us know if we are accomplishing our goal.

The January, 1972 .Short Talk Bulletin tells whom we should try to reach, and we can reach them by setting proper goals which ore clearly related to Freemasonry's purpose, TO MAKE GOOD MEN BETTER. It also tells us who can give us technical advice and suggest some problem areas.

In Key to Freemasonry's Growth there is a valuable "Performance Cycle" in Guide 7 on page 79.

"Guide 7 indicates that the first step in a successful Performance Cycle is to state the purpose of the organization and its general objectives. After this has been determined, division (or committee) goals are selected and the plans to implement them are suggested. The top leadership furnishes this information to the team (committee) leader, who in turn informs his members about what is desired. After a thorough and open discussion, the team leader returns to the top leadership with the results of the discussion. The goals are then modified or strengthened and all

are committed to their achievement. At a predetermined time the results are checked and those goals and actions not suitable are discarded: new tools or actions are set up. At a suitable time the team's performance or that of the individual, is checked against the stated objectives to determine the rate of progress. This is reviewed as a part of the over-all performance of the division. Hopefully, the results enhance the general objectives and purpose of the organization."

More Light in Masonry? How do we achieve it? With meaningful, realistic goals. Unless the Lodge knows where it is going, its members are lost. Then can't be expected to act if the leadership doesn't.

If we will work together - participate - we will set goals, follow them through to completion, and thereby brighten the light of Freemasonry.