



Brothers Being Brothers

This submittal is actually from the presentation that I gave at the Western States Conference in February. With the state of the world right now I think we can actually add to this and work together to figure out ways that we can help our friends, neighbors and our communities in general, not just our wonderful Fraternity. I am open to any ideas for moving forward and what I am seeing some of the brothers doing is absolutely wonderful. Keep working!

Synopsis: The basis of this presentation is to discuss how we as brothers should be working with and helping each other to sustain and grow our Lodges and the fraternity as a whole. How well do you know your brothers and what are you doing to get to know them better? What about the brothers that you don't know? What does being a Brother actually mean to you and how does this help you lead to self improvement? What does the Masonic family do in your community?

- The decline of the Fraternity – Celestial Lodge, Demit, NPD, Using Arizona and my Lodge, Aztlan #1, as a baseline, here are the numbers.
Celestial – AZ - 326 annual average

#1- 13 annual average

Demit – AZ – 198 average. This one is tricky. I think we can reduce it, but it will never go away due to relocation of brothers for jobs or moving closer to their family. The goal is to have them be an active part of Masonry and join a Lodge wherever they move to. 50% reduction would be wonderful.

NPD – AZ – 250 average. 100% reduction is the goal, but may be unrealistic due to us not doing our jobs and letting the men know what Masonry was about before they joined. Are we allowing men into the fraternity that really did not meet our standards? Or have we failed them in making them a viable part of our Lodges and helping them to become better men.

I was tasked with doing a study of the age of my Lodge back in 2013. We had 245 members. 206 of those members were 60+. That is 84% of the Lodge, talk about an eye opener! 3.6% were under the age of 50. 5 members were under 30 and 3 of them were active military and not even in the Country. Fortunately for my Lodge over the last several years we have had an influx of brothers in that under 50 age group. It is obviously absolutely vital for Masonry to continue to attract younger men. And this age group is looking for something. Why not Freemasonry? With the most current membership numbers that I have (2018) we currently have 6557 members. At a continued average 3% reduction in membership we will be at half those numbers in 23 years.

- Is this really a bad thing? – The 10% rule. Quality vs Quantity.

Raised – AZ – 205 average. 17 per month, is that a bad number? Are they active members, or just card carriers? There are 60 Lodges in AZ. This is barely 25% participation if you include all Lodges. We have 2 Lodges that are real member mills. But the numbers for those Lodges are 158 Demits and 407 NPD's vs 393 Raised. It has been my experience in my visits to all 60 lodges within the state that the 10% rule applies across the board. Regardless of membership numbers the 10% are doing all of the work. Is the answer smaller lodges with 80-100% participation than any sized Lodge with 10% participation?



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- Do you know your brothers?

This is a question for within your own Lodge and across your overall State membership. I am going to give you my own information. So I am going to pick on myself. My Lodge currently has 202 members, and I know 37% of them. Why don't I know all of them? Why shouldn't I know at least 75%? They are my brothers. I will touch on this a little more later in my presentation. I know that some do not live in the area or even the state anymore, but we have means of communication that is not just a face to face meeting. Over the last 7 years I have not been as active in my own Lodge due to my duties with the Grand Lodge. But even in that regard if you put all of the brothers that I have met traveling the state into a room I would be thrilled with being able to name 50% of them. Not because I don't know them, but that I am terrible with names. Name tags are the greatest thing ever!

- Bring a brother to Lodge – Preferably a degree, not a stated meeting. This is going to be one of my large goals for next year if I am elected as Grand Master. The concept is to contact your brothers that have not been to lodge in a while. Find out why and offer to pick them up and take them for a couple of months. Find out why they have stopped coming to lodge and get them involved again. Get to know them and create a friendship. After a couple of months get them to bring a brother to lodge and you find a new one to bring. My hope is that getting involved with these brothers and getting to know them will help to turn our NPD's around.

- Putting your brothers to work – Assign them a task, don't ask them what they want to do. It has been my experience that if you ask a brother what he wants to do you will probably come up with, or get, nothing. If you assign them a task though, and give them a deadline and follow through with them most of the time that task will be accomplished. Once you have the brothers working on tasks and becoming involved with the lodge then, as you get to know them, you can lead them into areas that they have a desire to work in.

- Social events– Successful Lodges hold events outside of the Lodge. As I have travelled around Arizona and my limited travel to other jurisdictions I see that most of the successful, growing lodges have events outside of the lodge room or building. Movie nights, cigar nights, B-B-Q's, or just getting together with families outside of the lodge builds great friendships and brotherhood. Other men that see this might just be interested in joining the fraternity. But this is where we have to be very diligent and informative. Masonry is not for every man, and it is our responsibility to choose wisely. More importantly, we need to really let our potential brothers know what is expected of them and what they will get out of the fraternity. I attend work meetings for a minimum of 10 hours a week, so going to another business meeting at least once a month is not really an appealing prospect. We need to make our meetings more about improving ourselves and learning than stating what the last meeting was about and reporting on our monthly bills!

- Being a Brother – Fraternal vs Blood. First I am going to ask you a question. Those of you that have brothers, have you always gotten along with them your whole life? Have they never



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annoyed you or made you mad? Or was there a time that you just did not want to be around them? If you can say no to these questions then you are fortunate! And those of you that honored us with service in our Military, how do you feel about those brothers? How do you treat them and do you stay in contact with them? So why would it be different with your Brothers in Masonry? You should ultimately treat them the same, they are your Brother. Look out for them. Don't let them wander too far astray. Listen to them and absolutely be there for them when you are needed. Get to know them and let them be a part of your everyday life. Some of the men joining the Fraternity today are desperately seeking this connection and as they become Brothers it is your responsibility to help take care of them when they need it. And through this process you may actually learn something about yourself or they may teach you something. And ultimately, hopefully, you will be a part of building a stronger Fraternity.

- Your community and the Craft – What is the impression of your Lodge in the community? The biggest question is do they even know you exist? How are you going to attract worthy men to join the Fraternity if no one knows who we are or what we do other than the latest conspiracy theory? This is something that your individual lodges are going to have to figure out. Each community is different, so the answers will all be different as well. In Arizona almost everyone participates in the “Bikes for Books” program, but in my experience there is not a lot of community interaction on this, just the schools. Some lodges are transforming this into getting kids tablets or computers. Another great idea is to go to the schools and participate in reading to the students. Everyone here knows that the parades are a big thing for some of our appendant bodies, maybe get involved with them and walk or ride in the parade. Just figure something out that you enjoy doing and get out there in the community to let them know we are still around and still relevant.

In closing Brothers, thank you for taking the time to read this and let us all continue to strive to improve ourselves and Masonry in Arizona.

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