

# Mentor Program

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Having discussed the many problem areas in lodges, many Brethren have agreed that one of the worst is not having a mentoring program. Not that we do not have great mentors in the Lodges; we do not have any that use the program. Nevertheless, I find myself guilty of the same crime. So, let us try and change this for the future.

There is a speech written on Mentoring that the Committee on Masonic Education disseminated: "Ways to Mentor a Brother by Worshipful Joe W. Murphy" many years ago. It is a Great Paper! And I will use some quotes from it.

In history, the term or action of mentoring comes from the original Mentor, a character in Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*. When Odysseus, King of Ithaca, went to fight in the Trojan War, he entrusted the care of his kingdom to Mentor. "Mentor" was the teacher and overseer of Odysseus' son, Telemachus.

The first time mentor is used in a Modern book was in 1699 in *The Adventures of Telemaque* by French Writer Francois Fenelon. Mentoring was

prevalent throughout the Industrial Age with the apprentice to the craftsman or Master. Doesn't this sound familiar?

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a mentor as "a trusted counselor or guide." For their Mentor/Protégé Program, the Anesthesiology Department of Cleveland's Metro Health System defines a mentor as "a wise, loyal advisor."

Mentoring denotes a relationship between a more experienced person—the mentor—and a less experienced person—the protégé. The mentor's role is to guide, instruct, encourage, and correct the protégé. The protégé should be willing to listen to instruction and constructive criticism and feel as though the mentor is concerned with their welfare. Mentor/protégé relationships are less structured and more personal than traditional teacher/student situations.

A mentor is usually older, always more experienced, and helps and guides another individual's development. This guidance is not given for personal gain. The rewards of a mentoring program to an individual in Freemasonry are its greatest strengths:

1. It enables long-term patronage and development of an individual or smoothing a Rough Ashlar.
2. Demonstrates personal commitment or become a contributing member of the Lodge.

3. Ensuring a high investment return by attracting and maintaining younger Masons with a lifetime of friends and Brethren.

This weekend, my wife and I attended "The Hiram Club" Installation of Officers and Gala. There were many niceties as well as the protocol that was done. Introductions and titles were plenty and highlighted, yet you could feel a breeze of excitement. Maybe it was the newly installed President, or it could have been the Grand Master and his wife. It was not. It was the fellowship between the young Masons with the older Masons and their families. You could see and feel the bond that tied them together and motivated their actions and the guests that came. These young Masons and their families had not just joined a fraternity; they joined a family. And in this family are lifetimes of disagreements, sadness, and happiness, as all families have. But it is the wealth of information and guidance or mentorship in their grasp to use. So, you ask how I can prove this, I will use myself as an example.

Let us start when I was nearly 18 and had just enlisted in the U.S. Navy. A Chief Petty Officer on the USS Eisenhower took on the duty of protecting a young sailor from his own self. At this age, my personal energies were only for myself, and let's say I was not the best example of a 4.0 sailor. When I came to work for him, it was a lot of butting heads. Please remember that Aircraft Carriers only had men on them at this time, so getting through the workday was clock watched as a school child. To finish work and go on liberty to be amongst society was always the highest priority for a young man. This

Chief knew this but also knew that trouble would follow soon if no one put me on a different path.

When I came to work for him, I had just arrived on the ship. As all new sailors I have to do my due diligence of "mess cranking." Anyone new to a command – especially those of lower rank – will be sent to the galley to help serve and clean up to alleviate the load from the cooks and other duties. I was sent to the Chief's Mess to attend to the Chief's Berthing. Now, as a young sailor, you hear the horror stories of the Chiefs and LPOs running these divisions and how everything must be perfect to be better than who was there before them. Keep in mind, my father was a Marine, so I knew the drill and, in my mind, would not be the sacrificial 24-hour worker.

My demeanor revealed too many attributes of my upbringing, and this Chief used it against me. Knowing that I had grown up in a military family, he worked on what was already instilled in me. Knowing this would keep me out of trouble and striving to be my best.

In one incident, I was supposed to go out for the weekend with some buddies from my division, "clubbing" (going to different nightclubs). But at this time I was only 18 years old and just that year Virginia had raised the drinking age to 21. I felt cheated over this and would not let it ruin my life. The Chief got wind of this and put me on the roster to work with him the weekend. I had already done duty the weekend prior. So, you can imagine

I was not a happy sailor. I did not just work standard days the weekend; we worked extended hours.

By Saturday afternoon, I was upset. But I would show him, I didn't complete my duties as well as I should have and disappeared a time or two. But the Chief showed up and made me do my tasks again, and he stayed with me in the area. That Saturday evening, he brought me dinner from the Chief's Mess, and we had dinner together in the dining room. It was really the first time we talked. He talked about himself and his family, but not so much; he made it about me. Sunday was much easier, and I only had to clean up after meals, and the berthing was allowed to wait until Monday (there weren't many Chiefs there anyway). I still did my duties, made the racks, and picked up the uniforms (dry cleaned, of course) for the Chiefs coming in on Monday (it always was good to know the guys in the laundry).

When my shipmates who went out for the weekend came back on Sunday evening, I heard how much fun they had, and I was pretty upset again. When Monday morning came, my attitude changed. As I walked through the Hanger Bays, two of the guys who went with the others who were also underage were brought back to the ship, after having been arrested.

When I saw Chief Dan Pacomio that morning, I asked how his night was. The rest of my time I didn't create so many problems for him. Do not get me wrong, me and the Chief had some arguments. But even then, I knew he didn't have to teach me the things he did and take the extra time to talk

to me. But he took the time not just to have me work but to guide me to becoming a man, to do the right thing no matter what. In taking that time, he got fewer headaches. He taught that leaders are people to look up to by their actions, not their words. At the time, this was not the case with most of the people of my age I knew. Yet for him, he was always there, even when I did get in some circumstances.

The crazy thing in this story, is sometime later I was at Ocean View Lodge to give this paper on "Mentors", not knowing Chief Dan Pacomio, now retired Master Chief Pacomio, was a Brother Mason at Owens Lodge. He happened to show up that night and was sitting in the Lodge room. He became Worshipful Master of Naomi Lodge a couple of years later. Worshipful Pacomio's example is that the action of a man is what is essential, no matter the consequences and the efforts one needs to put in to be a better individual. Even now, that memory and teaching flashes in my memory when I see him. Worshipful Brother Pacomio still checks on me to this day. He never owed me or my family anything. Looking back now and even then, I never really said, "Thank you". He took a kid with no relations and tried to keep him from harm and lead him to a better path. "Thank you for being there always, Worshipful Brother Pacomio".

I consider the Mentors in my life blessings because there have been many in it. Some have passed to the Celestial Lodge above, and I miss them tremendously. Yet, many are still alive and instructing me on a better path

today. I often forget to say, "Thank you" and apologize for not doing that. "Thank you," to all that read this paper, for each of you teach me something.

Lodges need Mentor Programs instituted in them. Brethren need Mentors. We have Coaches or someone to help us with learning the catechism or to learn the basics for the alternate method. Coaches and Mentors have different roles. Some will say the Coach takes on the role of Mentor as well. This may happen, but it is not the norm. I ask the Brethren to reconsider starting a Mentor Program in their Lodge. This way, we can all have that feeling of family.

And now, as I have begun to mentor younger Masons, I pray I can be as good as the Brother and Brethren I have spoken of in this paper and conversation. Hopefully, I will be as irreplaceable as they have become to me. I can promise that I will always push the examples of mentorship and the bonds created among us to others.