

Planting The Seed
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Many Masons have never sponsored a candidate and many have never even discussed Masonry within the work place, within leisure activities, or even within their own families. It may be that they are uncomfortable with what to say or how to handle themselves. Here are a few tips and thoughts on how to handle those first few approaches to a prospective candidate.

BE AWARE OF YOUR AUDIENCE: Just because the prospective candidate doesn't look or dress like you doesn't mean that he doesn't subscribe to the Masonic principles in his heart and wouldn't make a good Mason. A recent survey indicated that only 2% of the male population is even interested in Freemasonry, about 85% of American males don't belong to any type of organization, any organization, only 25% know anything about Masonry, and about 22% responded that they might be interested in joining.

BE AWARE OF WHAT YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU STAND FOR: There are a myriad of facts and general Masonic knowledge that you can share with the prospect. If you are in doubt about any possible topic of Masonry, talk to your Worshipful Master or other Mason well versed in the Craft. Basically you will need to be "in tune" with the prospect and Masonically educated enough to be able to pass on to them the answers to two simple questions:

1. What is within Freemasonry for me?
2. Why should I become a Mason?

We can answer questions by being an example: for instance, you can personally explain what your membership means to you. Ask to yourself the question, "Why did I petition my lodge?" Here are some of the answers that others have given:

I will have people I can turn to in tough times, with the confidence that moral (and sometimes financial) help will be given.

Opportunities to associate with those who have similar interests. To share with those a genuine friendliness toward each other.

A chance to "go to school" and receive a higher degree in ethical living and behavior.

An understanding that a good journey through life is an attainment, a reward in itself. That our basis in Freemasonry is an understanding of our relationships with others along the journey.

The Mason needs to understand that as soon as he has made known to others that he is a member of the Fraternity, he becomes an example of Masonry to the uninitiated.

THE APPROACH: The initial approach almost always takes a direct contact. It almost always takes the Mason to initiate the conversation. Perhaps, by referring to the enjoyable time that you or you and your family had at the recent lodge event. Remember, there may be questions about "What Lodge?", "What event?" or "What's Masonry?", so you must be prepared. Give honest, sincere answers and project enthusiasm. You won't be able to interest anyone in Masonry if you are not interested yourself.

The first approach should be a neutral approach. Use casual conversation to find out what barriers there may be for your friend or relative in becoming a Mason. The danger at this point is being too zealous, too much of a salesman. Listen closely and accept the feedback you get. Arguments **MUST** be avoided.

Recognize that Freemasonry is not necessarily for all men. In "planting the seed" you will not succeed every time, but you will raise the level of public awareness of Masonry.