

Entered Apprentice Degree Toolbox Item

This toolbox item is intended to build upon the lessons that were taught during the EA Degree. The participants are a masonic Mentor and a New Brother. The author is R.W. Brother Tim Martel.

Mentor: Brother XXXX, now that you have completed your 1st degree and have earned the title of Brother, I want to ensure that you understand some of the key lessons that have been imparted to you. For example, do you remember the significance of the white leather apron.

New Brother : As I recall, the apron has something to do with innocence but I would appreciate it if you would refresh my memory.

Mentor: Sure, mankind has always considered the Lamb to be a creature that minds its own business and is not considered to be a threat to anyone or anything. That being the case, Masonry has established the Lambskin as a symbol of innocence and the badge of a Mason because it represents the purity of life and conduct which is necessary to gain admission into heaven or what we call the Celestial Lodge Above. We also refer to God as the Supreme Architect of the Universe.

New Brother: Wow that is pretty heavy stuff. I hate to tell you but I am no saint and far from innocent. Am I good enough to be a Mason?

Mentor: Sure you are, especially if you remember and try to practice the lessons that we teach during the three degrees. As far as I know, there are no Masonic Saints but we are expected to believe in a Supreme Being, Treat others as we would like them to treat us, Obey the laws of the Land and continually strive to be a better man in all respects.

New Brother: One of the lectures defined the meaning of a lodge and that really confused me. Isn't the lodge building considered to be the lodge?

Mentor: I can see why that would be confusing to you. Although Masonic lodges as we know them, usually meet on a regular basis in a building that they refer to as their lodge. Masons have been known meet in places other than traditional lodge buildings due to the circumstances that they are in. For example, it is very common to learn that military personnel who are Masons, have held Masonic meetings aboard ship or in a tent or even in trenches during wartime.

New Brother: How can Masonic meetings be held in trenches etc. when there are non-Masons present?

Mentor: Good question. They can't. A Masonic lodge shall never be opened and business/degrees conducted in the presence of non-Masons no matter what the situation is. It is the responsibility of every Mason to ensure that the mysteries of Masonry are preserved and that cowens and eves droppers are not permitted to observe a lodge meeting.

New Brother: How many Masons does it take to open a lodge?

Mentor: That depends upon which degree the lodge is opened in. The Entered Apprentice lodge requires 7 or more Masons to open.

Mentor: The W.M, S.W., J.W., Treasurer, Secretary, S.D. and J.D. However, the EA Opening ritual also includes the S.S. and J.S. and that makes 9 officers. So, it would be O.K. to open an Entered Apprentice Lodge with two of the officers that are listed above, not present.

New Brother: Are you saying that it would be O.K. to open an Entered Apprentice Lodge without the Master and Senior Warden, for example?

Mentor: No, the Master and both Wardens must be there. Also the Senior and Junior Deacons play an important part in the opening ceremony and the Secretary should be there to record the meeting. It would be O.K. to open an Entered Apprentice Lodge without any of the remaining officers in attendance.

New Brother: How many Masons are required to open the other two degrees?

Mentor: It takes 5 to open a Fellowcraft Degree and 3 to open a Master Mason degree. The details will be explained to you after you have completed those degrees.

New Brother: During my 1st degree, the officers made frequent references to East, West and South. Why are the compass headings so important to Masons? Also, why don't we talk about the North?

Mentor: Masons recognized early on that the Sun rises in the East and sets in the West. They also noted that civilization arose in the East and spread to the west. That said, our forefathers established the

east as a place of honor. The West was also recognized as a very important direction. That is why lodge rooms are oriented East-West. The North is a very cold place and Masons chose to exclude that location when establishing the key officer positions in a lodge. It was only natural for them to agree that the three top officers of a lodge would be seated in the East, West and South.

Mentor: During the lessons that were given to you during the 2nd half of your 1st degree, the speaker mentioned the Supports of a lodge. Did you understand what he was talking about?

New Brother: Not really. Would you please refresh my memory?

Mentor: Masonry has established Wisdom, Strength and Beauty as the supports or pillars of a lodge. Wisdom to contrive, Strength to support and Beauty to adorn all great and important undertakings.

New Brother: I don't understand why the Holy Bible, Square and Compasses are called the furniture of a lodge?

Mentor: The Holy Bible is dedicated to God, the Square to the Master and the Compasses to the Craft.

New Brother: What do you mean "The Craft"?

Mentor: The Craft is a term that Masons affectionately use to refer to the membership and everything that Masonry represents.

New Brother: As I recall, The Tenets of Masonry are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Would you please explain what that means?

Mentor: Sure.

- **Brotherly Love – We are taught to love and respect all human beings, regardless of their station in life. We are all human beings and of equal importance in the eyes of God.**
- **Relief – It is our duty as Masons to help all human beings the best that we can. That might mean anything from donating money to help someone who is less fortunate to listening to a person who is distressed about something and every situation that one can imagine.**
- **Truth – Truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue. Lies lead to deceit and lack of trust. Nobody respects a liar.**

New Brother: What are the Cardinal Virtues and how are they defined?

Mentor: The four Cardinal Virtues are Temperance , Fortitude, Prudence and Justice.

- **Temperance - Is that due restraint upon our affections and passions which renders the body tame and governable and frees the mind from the allurements of vice. Avoid excess in all things.**
- **Fortitude – Is that noble and steady purpose of the mind that enables us to endure pain, peril or danger and avoid cowardice.**
- **Prudence – Teaches us to regulate our lives and actions so that we do the right thing in all situations.**
 - **Justice – Treat all men with equal fairness and justice, regardless of who they are.**

New Brother: The four Cardinal Virtues are exactly what Mom and Dad taught me as a kid. I guess they knew what they were talking

about. I am looking forward to taking my Fellowcraft degree. Thanks for working with me.