



Graphic courtesy of Coach John S. Nagy

Your Masonic Bucket List – A Personal Working Tool

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Have you made your Masonic Bucket List? Do you know, beyond the text book definition, what a Bucket List is? Can a Masonic Bucket List be a Working Tool? A traditional bucket list itself is nothing more than a focusing device you can use to define and describe your life's objectives. If you create a bucket list for your life, you might include such things as travel to Europe; take a cruise, cross the country by RV, or any other such personal desire that, when included in your "Bucket List" becomes a Life's Objective.

Have you considered a Masonic Bucket List to help you define and focus your journey? We raise a new Master Mason and we explain he has begun a journey that is personal, and is limited only by his interests and initiative. What tools does a new Master Mason have to chart and plan a journey at this stage of his Masonic life? His (working) tools likely consist – at this point – of his new brothers telling him "join the York Rite", "join the Scottish Rite", or maybe "join the Shrine" (which are all fine recommendations with their own merits, but not the subject of this paper). Perhaps he has already become close with a brother who has or will become a natural mentor, sharing knowledge and experience, and teaching him how to evaluate the many masonic opportunities that will now come his way. In any case, a Masonic Bucket List might be just the tool to help a new Master Mason and experienced brothers alike put some order and purpose to their journey.

We tell every Master Mason that his journey is his own, so a Masonic Bucket List will also be uniquely his own, putting form to the journey ahead. If you are going to build your own bucket list, you will need to spend a few moments assessing your masonic interests. Do you like the ritual? Are you interested in the history of masonry? Do you like lodge administration? Do you like the search for the meaning behind the degrees, or do you like to learn and confer degrees? A new Master Mason does not have this frame of reference, so he will need some fundamental knowledge and experience before he can start his list. It is

possible a new Master Mason may need a few years before he has even the minimum understanding of the craft necessary to assess masonry and its many opportunities, let alone to set growth objectives and build a bucket list. It's okay, there's no right and wrong time for mapping out your journey; in fact, the new mason's interests and yours can - and likely will - change over time from adding and removing items from the bucket. The goal of this paper is not a final, hard-and-fast bucket list where no deviation is allowed, it's to prompt the Mason to give some thought to his journey and build something of an objective map to give him direction. Change can be good as well as healthy because it indicates growth, thought, and reflection. A map or a bucket list that never changes *might* indicate stagnation.

For the new Master Mason without the knowledge and experience to formulate a Bucket List, an experienced brother can always sit with the new brother and help him sketch out some rudimentary objectives - remember, change can be an indicator of growth so if a new Master Mason starts with a very rough list with some near-term objectives, it will at least get him started and maybe guide him gently into the habit of periodically reviewing his list. Some early "bucket" items might be to serve in the officer line, read some specific books related to masonry, visit lodges, or other near-term, achievable goals. It may lead the brother to focus early in his journey on what it is he wants and expects from masonry.

How does one go about making a Masonic Bucket List? There is no correct way to do it and there is also no incorrect way to do it; it is yours by design so you are the judge of what works for you. You might start with a cocktail napkin, a Post-it Pad, or an app on your smartphone. The important thing is to get your bucket list written onto some form that you can occasionally pick up and read, and then update or change. A list, depending on the brother, may change gradually over years, or it may change every few months. Regardless of how *often* it changes, those changes indicate you are looking at it and thinking about it. That defines it to me as a working tool - looking at it, thinking about it and your masonic interests and desires, and then acting through pursuit of the next item on your list, or changing the list itself.

If you are looking at your bucket list and thinking about it, that means you are - by default - thinking about your masonic journey and about what you want, what you seek, what interests you. And that, my brother, is the mark of an effective Masonic Bucket List. And by taking it out occasionally and reading it, you are employing your *own* unique working tool in crafting your own personal masonic edifice.

I wish you satisfaction and happiness in your quest for light! Journey on my brothers!