

Living the Journey: Just Imagine...

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My brother, have you pursued a spiritual path in your journey? Are you spiritually and symbolically linked to your lodge and to masonry? Have you established your own personal, philosophical tie to your lodge and the brethren that have gone before you, a tie that transcends meetings and committees and programs? No? Do you know how you might go about doing this? I will offer you a suggestion, generic in nature, for you to consider if you find yourself intrigued by the idea of a spiritual tie to your lodge and your journey.



The method I offer is similar to meditation, but more directly focused on your masonic journey. Many people (such as me) find traditional meditation challenging (difficult), so if you have not previously enjoyed meditative success, perhaps this technique will work for you. This process is focused specifically on you, your lodge, and brothers of your lodge who have gone before you. If you ever daydream, or think back and fondly remember a significant moment in your life such as graduation, or perhaps the day you left home, started college or maybe left for military basic training, then you should not find this experiment difficult as an idea or in practice. As with traditional meditation, this process requires some mental (spiritual) preparation, so these first steps are intended to ready your mind and imagination for your experiment.

This exercise will work more naturally and more easily if you are in your lodge when it is quiet and even better if you are alone. If possible, it should be somewhat dim, but not dark, just dim enough to relax your mind and open your imagination, allowing it a little room to run and explore. If you are able to arrange these or similar circumstances and are ready to begin, your first step is to take a look around the lodge room and take note of the unique qualities and attributes of the room, look at the stations, the furniture, the seats, the implements of the stations; pay particular attention to anything in the room that you know to have been there since your lodge opened and was set to labor. Now close your eyes and commit that imagery to your mind.

Next, find your lodge's portraits of its past masters and locate the first past master – taking special note of what year he spent in the east – and look at the next several PM's following him who would likely have been in the original officer line that first year. Look at their faces, not their portrait, not their jewels, not the backdrops. Look at the faces of the first ten or so PM's, look at their eyes and imagine them there, with you in the room. Now, imagine this first PM sitting in the East, presiding over a meeting and imagine his officers in their stations and places in the room you just studied. Picture these men in your mind discussing lodge issues of their day and time. Add as much detail as you can to make the imagery in your mind as real as you can. Sit in the seat you normally like to sit in during lodge and

imagine the past masters and officers in their stations and places, and the brethren in their sideline seats as the allegoric meeting unfolds. Try to imagine yourself participating in the meeting. Imagine them discussing an item of business that you and your lodge might discuss today like maintaining the yard, or improvements to the building. As you observe this metaphoric meeting in your mind, focus on the layout, the furniture, the implements of the stations, and especially those original items you noted in your preparation and now imagine the brethren interacting with the room and the objects. It is not your brothers of today wielding the implements of their offices, conducting the business of the lodge; rather it is the brothers of a bygone day using those same tools engaged in the affairs of the lodge.

If you are able, envision yourself in this meeting with your founding brothers, picture yourself as a newly raised master mason and this is your first-ever stated meeting. These are the men blazing the trail through which your masonic journey will pass and if you can create this moment in your mind it will deepen the tie between yourself and these brothers of the first days of your lodge. These are the mentors and leaders reflected in those portraits that follow in line, which set the lodge to labor with love for the fraternity and excitement for the future. Listen to what they might tell you as their newest master mason and try to create that wonderment and curiosity over the words you are hearing and the interactions within the meeting you are seeing.

The last and most important aspect of this moment to ponder as you metaphorically visit with your founding brothers is this - imagine this lodge as *their* lodge into which they have poured their love of masonry and love for their brethren. Imagine yourself in *their* lodge, taking care of their memories and their labors, guarding them against the advancement of time and against the intrusion of negative external forces and picture them looking to you to be the tiler of their memories. Ask yourself if you are carrying on their work, continuing the



long masonic line of brothers who have passed and will pass the West Gate of the lodge? Can you look these brothers in their eyes and tell them you have received their handoff across the generations and you are continuing their labors, continuing the essential work of their lodge to take good men, make them masons, and make them better? Can you tell them their efforts to build this lodge have not been meaningless and have not been forgotten in the passage of time?

My brothers, if you can take yourself this far in this exercise I would suggest that you have established a deeply symbolic link to your lodge and to masonry and entered an entirely spiritual path on your masonic journey. Once you create this experience the first time, you will find that you are able to do it again more or less “on demand” and with almost no preparation. You may even find yourself in some future stated meetings traveling back in your imagination to past meetings of those early days to find those worthy brothers mingling in your mind with your brothers of today, talking about their jobs, careers, and aspirations.

In lodges throughout Texas and beyond, portraits of our past masters adorn the walls of our lodge rooms or another room within our buildings. How many of us stop and take some time not just to look at the pictures, but to go further and reflect on their time presiding over our lodges and on their lives? If you silently answered “very few” or “not many”, it begs the question then why are the portraits there? Putting a picture on a wall is only the first step in memorializing a person or a brother. If the picture is then ignored, what tribute then is paid? What veneration has occurred? We theoretically honor our brothers for their service by memorializing them with their portraits in our lodges; but if no one takes even moments of time to ponder these men, to study their picture and imagine and remember their service to our lodges, can we honestly say we are honoring their memories and their labors? I suggest that no, we cannot.

Let me share a little secret that I have held back up to this point. If you undertake this small, meditative effort as I have described – or in some near form that perhaps works best for you – you will have also accomplished something profound; in joining with your lodge’s founders through your own private meditation you are also memorializing these brothers who have gone before you. This simple exercise allows our predecessors to live again – even if only briefly – through our connection and contemplation, revitalizing their energy and spirits within our minds and our hearts. What a wonderful gift to those who have preceded us across that level of time!



I ask you to reflect upon this meditative excursion which I have invited you to undertake, symbolically linking backward in time to your founding brothers and contemplating their place in the long, unbroken line of masonic service to your lodge; to our lodges and to the fraternity. Reflect for a moment on how you briefly animated their spirits through your personal connection, and how you revived their passions, even if only for a moment and only within your mind and perhaps your heart.

I leave you with this closing thought (or perhaps a challenge) – don’t be surprised if you occasionally catch yourself looking up at your past masters and wondering about their lives; what they thought, how they presided, who were their friends, who did they enjoy sitting with during lodge, who have they instructed and influenced along their masonic paths, and maybe wondering where their families and descendants are today? And each and every time you find yourself doing this, a past master and a brother is briefly given life and a tribute has been paid.

Continue your journey my brothers, and, if it strikes your fancy, you might just see if you can add a spiritual and reflective path to your travels! May the blessings of Heaven rest upon us!

Fraternally Yours,

BroBill