

The District Light

information and Masonic Education
(Niagara B District)

January, 2018

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Progression Through the Chairs

___ We are aware that there is a process of advancement in masonic offices. Each chair presents responsibilities and prepares the holder for the next position.

Each lodge stages an annual Installation and Investiture ceremony in which the brethren witness the placement of the new officers in their respective places.

The General Charge given at the end of the evening states, "Such is the nature of our institution that, while some must of necessity rule and teach, so others must of course learn to submit and obey. Humility in both is an essential duty.

"The brethren elected and appointed to assist in the government of this lodge are too well acquainted with the principles of Freemasonry and the rules of propriety to exceed the power with which they are entrusted."

The ceremony is co-ordinated by an Installing Master who chooses a team of members to assist with the program.

Often, that leader has performed the rites many times, but occasionally a newer past master takes on the task. That is what happened in at least two of the December Installations.

Merritt Lodge



W. Bro. Grant Shuttleworth and W. Bro. David Spano

W. Bro. David Spano did a fine job installing W. Bro. Grant Shuttleworth and investing the other officers of the lodge.

Reflections

Bro. Spano explained his motivation and preparation:

I was motivated to do the ceremony of installation after having been installed as Worshipful Master of Merritt Lodge by R.W. Bro. David Martin. He and his team did an amazing job and it really hit home the honour and responsibility that rests on the Master.

I wanted to impart the same feeling I had that night to my fellow brothers who would potentially become the Master of the Lodge.

I find for myself that if I break down the work into smaller parts and separately memorize them piece by piece, in order, then as a whole, the content stays with me. I learned this from my 10th grade English teacher on public speaking.

Whenever I have free time, I try to fit in an hour or two of practice, and sometimes if I can, I will practice for an entire afternoon. But I like to start early and spend just a few hours a day.

Organizing practices naturally are going to be the toughest part of leading any degree or ceremony. We all have things going on in our lives that make it tough to sync up all of our schedules. Despite that, in my experience, weekends are usually convenient to meet and practice.

I think one thing that makes installations so enjoyable, and well-executed is that it is done almost entirely by Past Masters who are well-seasoned in the Work. For a guy a like myself who has been a Past Master for barely a couple years, having the help of the veteran Past Masters to work out the details of the ceremony with me at the practices was really important and I have learned a great deal from all of them.

It's this help that motivates me to want to lead any work.

I have had opportunities to lead degrees as well as the installation ceremony, and every time the brethren involved have done an outstanding job – another motivator for me to continue to take the lead in the various ceremonies we have.

I think every brother ought to be in charge of organizing and leading any ceremony at least once, and I believe It is a contributing factor in the experience of being a Mason.

The General Charge

The last lecture of the evening is a fine summary of the ideals that masons aspire to. A well-delivered talk is quite moving.

W.Bro. Kevin Proulx’s interpretation ended the evening in fine style.



St. Mark’s Lodge

Any brother who has attended any of the Official Visits of the District Deputy has probably experienced the smooth and thoughtful delivery of information presented by W.Bro. Michael Ferguson. His skill at public speaking is inspiring.

Bro. Ferguson took to heart the idea that the outgoing master should install his successor. Besides doing excellent work as the installing master, he even gave the General Charge.



W.Bro. Ferguson, W.Bro. Paul Thomas,
R.W.Bro. Ronald Jordan.



A better photo of W.Bro. Michael Ferguson with his brother, W.Bro. Sammy Ferguson.

It’s Good For You

Masonry offers many benefits to any who choose its path, and many men have given testament to the improvements they have experienced through their involvement.

The key word is ‘involvement’. The old expression is true: “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.”

So the greater the participation, the greater the possibility of reward.

Abraham Maslow theorized that people have an innate desire for self-actualization. In other words, they are born with a desire to be all they can be, and pursue that desire with vigour.

Maslow created what he called a Hierarchy of Needs, which focuses on what makes people happy and the things that they do in order to achieve that which makes them happy.

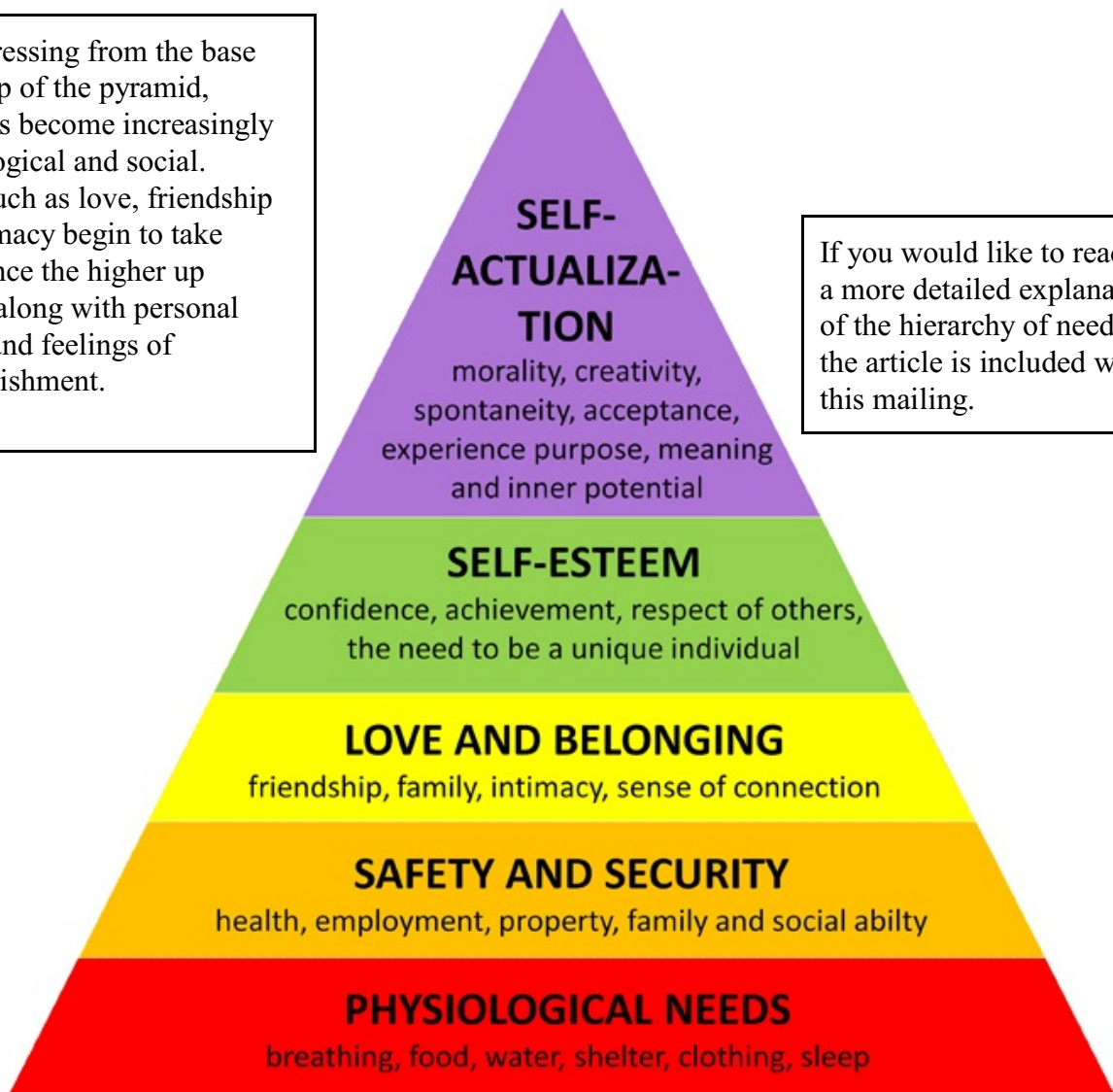
These basic needs, according to Maslow’s theory, are split into five tiers.

These tiers are often displayed as a pyramid, and at the base of this pyramid are the most basic of all, namely Physiological.

The pyramid is reproduced on the next page. Consider, as you study the graphic, how masonry can be a channel or path to assisting in a person’s self-development.

Progressing from the base to the top of the pyramid, the needs become increasingly psychological and social. Needs such as love, friendship and intimacy begin to take precedence the higher up you go, along with personal esteem and feelings of accomplishment.

If you would like to read a more detailed explanation of the hierarchy of needs, the article is included with this mailing.



It's All in Your Head

The myth of a static brain is being dispelled. We aren't 'wired at birth' with all of our aptitudes and latent abilities.

The old saying is false; you can teach an old dog new tricks. And not only will he learn them, he will become smarter in the process.

The concept of neural plasticity is based on idea that the human brain is an incredibly flexible organ that can be 'rewired' by various actions.

The flexibility of the human brain allows it to be shaped by good habits and to implement positive changes on a regular basis.

[An explanation of the brain's flexibility can be found [here](#).]

Feeding your brain

We don't stop growing after puberty, and if you don't continue to learn new things and improve your knowledge in old age, you will degenerate and stay stagnant, just like a still lake which becomes scummy. That's what happens to your brain if you don't keep it active and teach it new things.

Thought-provoking challenges help you expand your knowledge and improve your thinking, so don't avoid them even if learning something new seems like a difficult task – you have to be a little bad at first to get better.

[I expect that you can guess where this train of thought is leading.]

Learning and Growing

One of the 'shocks' of joining masonry is that you were asked to memorize several passages of text. Many men have been worried that they couldn't meet the challenge.

But we all did it, and felt pride in our accomplishment. Not only did committing words to memory get easier, but we also became better at speaking in public.

One of the ways that masonry makes good men better is that it alters your brain.



Learning Something New

Each person finds his own way to memorize, but there might be a better way for you here.

It has been found that if you want to remember something, read it out loud.

Scientists tested four ways of remembering by asking students to:

- read a list of words silently,
- read them out loud,
- listen to someone else read them,
- listen to a recording of their own voice repeating the words.

Then the students were asked to look at a long list of words and remember which ones they had already seen. Their recall varied across the four techniques.

Silent was the worst. It's a little better to hear someone else's voice. It's better still to hear your own voice, but it's best to produce the words yourself and both hear your own voice and move your own mouth.

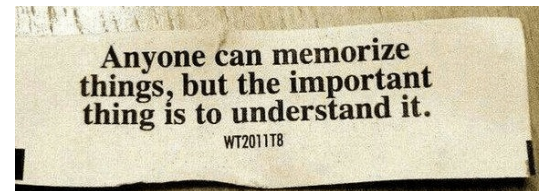
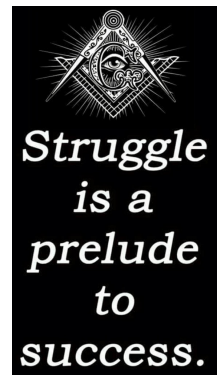
[Saying something out loud can also improve short-term recall. You can reassure yourself that you did something that you fear you might have forgotten, by saying, "I locked the door" or "I turned off the stove."]

Out of the Zone

When you look around a lodge room, you see men who look very comfortable in their surroundings, but each of them had been faced with getting out of their comfort zone and trying something new.

Not only that, but they had to 'perform' in front of others.

Some men have gotten so good at their Work that (a) they make it look easy, and (b) they make us think that we would like to be that good.



Listening to someone recite a passage, and absorbing the message, helps to increase our brain's capacity. Even better is learning the piece yourself by whatever means works best for you.



**IF IT IS IMPORTANT
TO YOU, YOU WILL
FIND A WAY.**

**IF NOT
YOU'LL FIND
AN EXCUSE**

Further Insights

Here are some thought-provoking passages on the theme of stretching ourselves.

When we make a change, it's so easy to interpret our unsettledness as unhappiness; our unhappiness as a result of having made the wrong decision.

Our mental and emotional states fluctuate madly when we make big changes in our lives. Some days we could tight-rope across Manhattan, and other days we are too weary to clean our teeth.

This is normal. This is natural.
This is change.

Jeanette Winterson

When she transformed into a butterfly, the other caterpillars spoke not of her beauty, but of her weirdness. They wanted her to change back into what she had always been.

But she had wings.

Dean Jackson

Those that know, do.
Those that understand, teach

The Human brain is an amazing organ. It functions 24 hours a day from the day we are born and only stops when we are performing ritual



Improving Memory

The strength of your memory depends upon the way in which you memorize rather than upon how much it is used.

What you want to do is to learn the best ways of memorizing.

Have a look at [this](#).

As a bonus, after you have seen that article, there is another that lists the best westerns ever made. If you want to skip directly to that piece, click [here](#).



Masons are recognized and respected for their promotion of blood donation.

If you can't give blood, perhaps you could volunteer at clinic once every month or two.

The clinic held at the Optimist Club in Niagara Falls could use some assistance, but find out how you can serve anywhere by going to [Blood.ca](#) and clicking on 'Volunteers'.

Make your Lodge Great Again

With 2018 beginning, how about making a resolution to try something which will put life into your lodge, will encourage absent brothers to attend, and will attract new members.

Included with this mailing is a document which lists 100 Ideas for member recruitment and retention.

Either pick one as your project, or bring the list to the lodge for discussion.

You could be the start of a movement.

A revolution maybe.

