

The “Could Be”

Composite Lodge No. 30, May 28, 2012

I would like to share with you a nonsensical poem that has a great message. This poem is about opportunities, taking chances and being satisfied with yourself when you can look back on a job well done.

I'd rather be a Could Be
If I could not be an Are;
For a Could Be is a May Be,
With a chance of touching par.

Your Worshipful Master Elect, decided some time ago that he would like to be a “Could Be”. Tonight he will indeed be installed in the chair of King Solomon and start his services as the Worshipful Master of this lodge. This is a position for which he has been training for many years. He has managed to evade the many pitfalls on the way to this position. Today there are more challenges than ever for a brother to ascend his way through the traditional seven offices to the Master's chair. Congratulations, this will be a special year, one that you will remember for the rest of your life.

We live in an era when many are reluctant to step forward and take an office. This reticence could be due to the risk of personal criticism once in the office. Our hesitation is understandable, however there are so many advantages in stepping forward and going through the offices of a Masonic lodge.

You have that opportunity to test, in a supportive environment, your ideas on management, administration and leadership. The experience that you learn here can then be used at work and in other more public activities.

Then there is the second verse that goes this way –

I'd rather be a Has Been
Than a Might Have Been, by far;
For a Might Have Been has never been,
But a Has was once an Are.

This verse celebrates the fact that we have conquered the challenges of leadership even though we were hesitant at first.

I want to direct my comments to those “Has Beens”, who have just finished their year as the Worshipful Master, for you have a tremendous wealth of experience and knowledge of Masonry. You can and should be a great asset to any lodge or District. Once you have completed your year, then share

your experience with the incoming Master. Sharing ideas and thoughts in a friendly way is always welcome. I have used this approach by saying, “to effectively use my ideas you must be comfortable with them. Take my thoughts and ideas mold them, change them or modify them if they can be helpful, however if you don’t use them I will understand.”

Some of our Past Masters want to help and be needed. At the same time we have young members who would like to take an office and someday become the Worshipful Master. They are often reluctant to take on the role when they know that family and work, which should take priority, will interfere with their lodge work as an officer.

The experienced Past Master could be matched with a new officer. This match would provide the new officer with a wealth of experience and knowledge and at the same time make the Past Master feel that his experience and knowledge is being put to good use.

The duties of the Past Master or Confidante would be to coach, mentor and act as a sounding board for the Officer. A Confidante is a person entrusted with the confidence of another and can share secrets in confidence. The Confidante would be there as a Friend to answer his questions about Masonry. As a Past Master works with the Officer he would make it a point to also know the work of that Officer so that in an emergency the Confidante would be able to step in and do the work. This would also be of benefit to the Worshipful Master as he would know that there is always someone ready to do the work should one of his officers get called away or becomes sick.

If implemented this would provide the lodge with Confidante/Officer Teams (COTs). Now the officer would be teamed with a Past Master, well experienced in the craft, to discuss his role, get advice, and with whom to practice. They would probably develop a very lasting relationship. It would provide the Senior Brother with an opportunity to feel useful and put his experience and skills to good use.

Congratulations to you, the Master elect, on your Installation this evening and to you the Worshipful Master congratulations on a great job and may you enjoy your retirement and be a credit to your lodge as a Confidante to a younger officer.

As the Master Elect and previously a “Could Be” you have a dream or vision of how you want Composite Lodge to evolve this year. To assist you in capturing those dreams I have as your Worshipful Master’s Working Tool a dream catcher. May you have a great year!

Educator’s Handbook of Stories – M. Dale Baughman

R. Bro. Douglas E. Galt
DDGM Ontario District