

MASONIC EDUCATION

Basic Training – Masonic Knowledge

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It is important to make a clear distinction between **Basic Training** and **Masonic Knowledge** in the broad field of Masonic Education. Basic Training consists of HOW we do things in Masonry – the mechanics, protocol and etiquette, established usages and customs, and traditions peculiar to the Craft. Masonic Knowledge consists of WHY we do things in Masonry – history, symbolism, and philosophy.

Both aspects are important, but we have tended to emphasize the former often at the expense of the latter. If we understand why we do the things we do in the performance of the degrees – saluting, squaring the lodge, carrying the wand, etc. – it naturally follows that we will easily conform to the proper form and order.

To understand the more profound meaning of Freemasonry as an initiatory order is the principal purpose of Masonic Education. In this sense the Lodge is a learning centre and every meeting provides learning opportunities for those with ears to hear, eyes to see, and minds to comprehend. It is the stated duty of the Worshipful Master “to employ and instruct the brethren in Masonry.” In this sense, Freemasonry is the largest and oldest institution devoted to adult education. Education and Freemasonry are synonymous terms.

At the beginning of our Masonic journey, we are admonished “*to make a daily advancement in Masonic Knowledge.*” It is in the genius of Masonry that the Candidate is never ‘force fed’ but is encouraged to seek for himself the answers to those questions that are important to him. Sadie Black gave this advice, “*Be curious always! For knowledge will not acquire you; you must acquire it.*”

The Most Worshipful Past Grand Master, M.W. Bro. D. Garry Dowling, challenged us to be “Believers in Freemasonry” and to demonstrate our belief in three ways:

1. Expand horizons by pushing the boundaries of Masonic learning;
2. Re-energize experienced Masons by encouraging them to broaden their existing knowledge;
3. Engage new Masons by assisting them to tap into their apparent limitless thirst for knowledge.

The Ashlars symbolize that life long journey of discovery that is the essence of Freemasonry. Truly it has been said that, “*The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder.*” (Ralph W. Sockman)

EDUCATION – the process; LEARNING the method; KNOWLEDGE the product.