

Ionic Lodge No. 549

Official Visit / October 2nd, 2013

'The Three 'A's' Attitude, Aptitude and Altitude'

My wife recognizing this was an important evening for me, gave me the following advice; "Don't try to be witty, charming or intelligent; just be yourself."

Are you having a good day? As I look upon your faces, I believe this to be so for the majority. But perhaps, there are a few amongst us who may be in a less than perfect mood. A 'bad mood' can be quickly adjusted; the easy way is coming in contact with a person of a cheerful disposition; a good joke, a smile or even hearing your favourite music. The not so easy way is demonstrated by the actress Cher in the movie Moonstruck when she gives her co-star an attitude adjustment by slapping him across the face with the accompanying words "snap out of it". Personally, I prefer the former. So, the next time you encounter someone in a bad mood, don't slap them across the face and say the DDGM told me to do it.

For all intents, a 'mood' is a short-term condition, whereas an attitude, also known as demeanor, mindset or perspective, either positive or negative can survive for a much longer period of time, even a lifetime. Points of view are generally formed from a collection of life experiences and quite often dictate how we see and approach particular situations in our daily lives. As we grow older, these become more and more entrenched and hence the expression 'hardening of the attitudes'.

We become comfortable with 'what we know' or at least 'what we think we know'. We are less flexible to accept new things or to readily ponder new ideas. Is it because we are tired; too old or simply don't care? In reality, we don't have an excuse, young and old alike ...maybe we do need a good slap. We can make the choice to change! It just takes a conscience decision. Remember from the Charge to the Wardens in the Installation Ceremony: "what you have seen praiseworthy in others, it is expected you will carefully imitate and what in them may to you appeared defective, you will in yourself amend". When was the last time you heard someone say "You will have to excuse me..it's my negative attitude". This is not a debilitating condition, but it can be if we allow it.

Our demeanor is our approach. Given a certain situation, we can predict how people will react, simply by identifying their perspective to the particular circumstances. One's attitude can be worn like a badge of honour if it is positive or it can hang around their neck like an anchor if it is negative. And here is the kicker; it's not just theirs. It can be as pervasive as a skunk at a wedding; everyone gets a whiff.

The positive and healthy temperament of every member of a lodge will have a significant impact on the prosperity of that lodge and will definitely keep the skunk away. I don't think this approach is really up for debate. I have seen many lodges both within and beyond our district that benefit from the 'glass half full' point of view.

The members of these lodges work together, socialize together and deal with challenges together. In essence, it is a one for all and all for one approach. This is a win-win circle of prosperity...we bring our positive self to lodge...the lodge and our brethren win...and the lodge in return, cultivates and enlightens our minds and enjoins us in our pursuit of happiness. What could be better?

As you can see, there are two sides to this approach; the willingness you have to make positive adjustments to your personal attitude and in return, the lodge's commitment to enrich and nourish your soul through brotherly love and sincere friendship.

So, to get down to the nitty-gritty, what are some notions that might negatively impact a Lodge? I cast no aspersions on anyone here, but over the 25 years I have been a member, I can honestly say I have heard some variation of following at one time or another. Can we identify with any of these?

- **That's not my job!** It may not be 'your job' but it is a job that needs to be done. "Lay hold where need it...."
- **I don't know!** That may be right, but consider the question may be coming from your youngest member who has a thirst for knowledge. Perhaps you could direct him to someone who does or the resource that holds the answer to his question.

- **That's not the right way to do it!** I particularly like this one; especially muttered so no one else can hear it...but everyone heard it enough to comment on it later. Would it not be so much more productive to notice the area in need of improvement and offer to mentor and assist that brother? Your wise counsel and direction will go a long way to lifting a brother from despair and he will likely pay it forward sometime in the future which is a credit to you in the first place.
- **Someone should do / or get / or whatever!** I feel so sorry for this guy named 'Someone'. He is everywhere; at business meetings, fundraisers, and lodge meetings. "Someone will do it...Go and find Someone". Just a suggestion...but maybe we should each carry more of 'Someone's Load'.

I might suggest the acronym 'A.T.O.M.' which I just made up and stands for, what I shall call the 4 Requisite Attitudes; 'Assistance, Tolerance, Optimism and Modesty'. Lend a hand; accept your shortcomings and those of others; view the glass half full rather than half empty and set aside arrogance in favour of modesty.

In addition to the first of the three "A's", how could a lodge benefit from ones Aptitude? Firstly, an aptitude is ones natural ability or tendency to do something.

Can you recall from the Installation ceremony the statement "the man who understands to estimate and employ his means"?

Honestly, I always thought this referred to an individual's capacity to contribute financially. Perhaps it does, but could 'means' not also refer to someone's natural abilities, talents and tendencies? These are God given and should be employed to the extent of their total usefulness. I think an aptitude is divine. These gifts are bestowed upon us for a reason. More often than not, others interpret our reflection in the mirror better than we do of ourselves. Let our brethren help us see; to be the very best we can be and employ our 'means'.

As a lodge, I think we need to estimate and employ the 'means' of our members. What special talents and abilities do our individual members have to offer? I am embarrassed to admit, but after 25 years of being a member there are a good number of my brethren for whom I call my friends that I do not know what they do for a living or what hobbies they pursue. I have a feeling I may not be alone. How then can we estimate their means and employ their talents if we know little about our most valuable resource...our members?

Every Lodge has needs...financial planning, goal setting, membership, benevolence, desktop publishing, mentoring and education to name just a few. Within the roster of your membership, you will find brethren who possess unique skills to fulfill your lodge's requirements. The trick is matching the right talent to the need.

For example, I would no more have my dentist prepare my taxes as I would have the Canada Revenue Agency pull my teeth....although, I think they have tried.

Not only do we employ the 'obvious' talents within our lodge, we also have a responsibility to see talents in others that they have yet to discover for themselves. Bearing witness to a brother who discovers an untapped resource is truly exciting. We all win.

Finally my brethren, what can I say about the last of the three 'A's' which I referred to at the beginning: Altitude! I really have little to say on this point other than good things come in threes and I needed something to round out other two 'A's'. But, seriously, when it 'all comes together', there is no telling what can be accomplished...how high you will soar, and to what height of success your lodge will achieve.

And, if by some chance I have been witty, charming or intelligent, don't tell my wife...I want to keep her guessing.

Thank you for your very kind attention.

Written by:

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