

District Deputy Grand Master's Official Visit

The Electric Lodge No. 495

Accompanying Lodge - Meridian Lodge No. 687

Masonic Centre of Hamilton

Wednesday November 19, 2008

Brethren, for those of you that were at my last official visit at the end of October at Wardrope Lodge might remember that I talked to you about **The Challenge of Change** and referenced the phrase **“Playing to Win”**. The concept being that we are challenged to change old patterns, to experiment and take risks, to depend upon others for support, and to produce “more for less”. We are to use a strategy based in the future, let go of the security of the past to reach for the promises and opportunities of the future.

Dick Leider, the author of “The Power of Purpose”, interviewed elderly people asking them, **“If you could live life over again, what would you do differently?”** There were thousands of responses, but the three (3) most common were these:

- I would take more risks
- I would take more time to reflect
- I would try to learn more from my experiences

One 86 year old lady summed it up as follows: “I’d dare to make more mistakes next time. I would limber up. I would take fewer things seriously. I would take more chances. I would climb more mountains and skip more rivers. I would eat more ice cream and fewer beans. I would perhaps have more troubles, but I would have fewer imaginary ones”.

Since playing to win is about going as far as you can using all that you've got, the game is about **courage and creativity**. It requires courage to "go as far as you can," and the creativity to discover and utilize "all that you've got." We must have the courageous attitude of facing and dealing with anything recognized as dangerous, difficult or painful instead of automatically withdrawing from it. Courage helps us to take risks and move through fears. We need creativity to find solutions to the obstacles we may face. As Mark Twain said, "Courage is resistance to fear and mastery of fear, not the absence of fear". Courage may be best illustrated by a billboard on the side of an interstate highway in Michigan. It shows a picture of Christopher Reeve, and an American actor who played in the movie Superman. He was paralyzed in a riding accident in 1995 and the picture shows him in his specially designed wheel chair. When one thinks of a courageous attitude to deal with difficult situations he comes to mind, maybe even seen as a hero – an ordinary individual who finds the strength to preserve and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.

Remember, difficult situations are put in our way not to stop us, but to call out our courage and our strengths. It is by stepping through fear that we can reach what seems to be impossible and make it possible. When we feel comfortable, when we aren't making any mistakes, and when our self-image is upheld and reinforced, we are in our "**comfort zone**". When we go outside our comfort zone, when we're asked to do things that don't even seem possible or appropriate for our self-image, we often experience tension and anxiety. But to expand our self-image and experience every aspect of ourselves, to really learn and grow, we have to get outside our comfort zone. Brethren, think about this

statement, **“Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow”**.

Of course it is not always easy to ignore these fears and show the courage necessary to do the difficult thing. The following are three (3) tools for helping you step through fear and Play to Win:

- **STOP** - When you feel yourself getting fearful or anxious, stop, take a deep breath, center yourself and observe what you are thinking, feeling, and doing.
- **CHALLENGE** - Challenge your defective maps that are causing lost energy and self-defeating behaviors. What’s the worse that could happen? What’s the best that could happen? What’s the Playing not to Lose response? What’s the Playing to Win response? I earlier mentioned what Playing to Win means, Playing not to Lose is the concept that you use a defensive strategy based in the past. You try to maintain the security and comfort of what you are used to by avoiding what you fear may happen in the future.
- **CHOOSE** – Once you’ve challenged your thoughts; choose a response that’s in your best interest. Then, act upon your choice.

So brethren, as we step out of our comfort zone and grow, remember, “you can change without growing, but you can’t grow without changing. Our life is a journey and as a 6th century B.C. Chinese Philosopher once said, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step”. In closing brethren, I will leave you with this to reflect upon, **“Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path, and leave a trail”**.

Thank you