

Catch the Energy and Release the Potential

Temple Lodge – January 17, 2012

Have you ever found yourself in a “toxic energy dump?” I’m sure that your first response is “What is a toxic energy dump?” This is when you are with a group of people often at work, a gathering of volunteers or in lodge and the conversation turns negative and you feel drained of energy. You can do something about it.

In his book called “Fish,” Lundin describes how workers in a business or a volunteer organization can find themselves in a “toxic energy dump.” As Masonic Lodges we can find ourselves in a similar situation. Business employees in this situation will stay considerably longer to collect their pay cheque however volunteers and brethren of a lodge in the same situation just don’t return. Soon we find we are standing on the edge of this “toxic energy dump.” So how do we avoid this pitfall? One way is to never stop expanding your knowledge and sharing it with others. President Roosevelt, a distinguished American President and Mason was still learning to the day he died. When his body was removed, a study book was found under his pillow.

We could follow the example of others who have injected energy into their daily routine. The owners of a fish market in Seattle, Washington called Pike Place Fish Market found themselves operating in a “toxic energy dump.” The working conditions were not the best in their cold, wet and sloppy surroundings where they handled and sold dead smelly fish. They decided to do something about their environment.

“There is always a choice about the way you do your work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself.” You can choose the attitude that you bring to lodge. It can be a happy, sunny, playful cheerful attitude or you can be out of sorts, grumpy and irritate the brethren at lodge. Life is indeed short, so at the fish market even though they could not change the physical working conditions they chose to have fun and pretend to be world famous. Fish were flying through the air with calls of “this salmon going to Minnesota” or ‘here are 5 crabs off to Montana” and in unison all staff would repeat the order like an echo. Customers even got involved in the fun. They managed to convert routine, unpleasant, boring work into one that was interesting and enjoyable.

The Fish Market was now electric with enthusiasm as staff enjoyed their work. They found that they could have respectful fun on the job but at the same time be serious about their business. Customers were attracted to watch the workers and then encouraged to try to catch the flying fish. While the workers had fun they were also able to “Make Their Day” for the customer and their customers loved it.

It was equally important that the workers “be present.” The workers were constantly scanning the crowd and interacting with the customers. They didn’t just stand there daydreaming. They talked with customers as though they had been friends for ever.

Masonry is exciting and certainly not boring, however I believe that we can learn how to make it even better from the Pike Fish Market and the book called Fish by Lundin. We can choose our attitude and make it an enjoyable experience, each and every time we come to lodge.

There is the opportunity to have fun. In 1717 when the 4 lodges organized into a Grand Lodge in England one of the 2 reasons they came together, was to renew the quarterly feast to enjoy the fellowship it provided.

We also have the opportunity every day to "Make Their Day." We can create some great memories when we make a brother's day. When was the last time you called a brother just to say "hello, how are you doing?" A wonderful feeling can be gained if we make it a point to once a day "make some one's day."

When you go to lodge are you really present? Do you scan the room for a visitor that you can make welcome? Did you notice the new Entered Apprentice Mason that was standing off by himself wondering what to do? Did you go over and give him some help by informing him of what might be happening in to-night's meeting?

For enjoyable and rewarding experience in Masonry we can 1) – "choose" a positive attitude for every meeting; 2) – make sure that we have respectable "fun" during both labour and refreshment; 3) – actively look for ways to "make their day" and; 4) – be really "present" at the meetings and notice what you can do for your lodge.

The following could be a Creed that a Masonic Lodge might consider following.

Our Masonic Lodge Creed

As you enter this Masonic Lodge please "choose" to make today a great day. The brethren and you yourself will be thankful. Find ways to "play." We can be serious about our work without being serious about ourselves. Stay focused in order to "be present" when your visitors and new members most need you. And should you feel your energy lapsing, try this sure fire remedy: Find someone who needs a helping hand, a word of support, or a good ear --- and "make their day."

My 11th working tool for you Worshipful Master, is a package of "Fish Crackers" to remind you of the importance of having respectable fun in Masonry and regularly "Making Their Day" for a brother. Have a great year as the Worshipful Master and if I can be of any assistance to you in the coming year please let me know at your convenience.

Fish – Stephen C. Lundin Ph.D.

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