



RITE NOTES

Dealing With Difficult People

15 April 2025

Companions and Sir Knights

When I was Junior Warden, a man came to the Lodge for a regulation I had never seen before. I introduced myself, shook his hand, chatted with him a little bit. When it got time to open lodge, I noticed him leaving. So, being Junior Warden, doing my job of trying to keep people happy (being a leader), I said, "are you leaving already." He said, "Yes I am leaving," very harshly. "How can I stay when that man is here at lodge?" He proceeded to tell me that 25 years earlier this man (who was a regular at the lodge) stopped him from going through the chairs, and he carried a grudge ever since.

I really wasn't sure what to say. Then he turned and walked down the stairs. I stuttered and said, "have a nice summer". He stopped, turned and said, "How can I have a nice summer when that man is here?"

Welcome to the world of people. In my travels, I have found that most are pretty decent to work with. In fact, 90% of the people that you meet are honest, upright, decent individuals. Unfortunately, that less than 10% make a big impact on our lives.

Every organization is composed of a unique group of individuals. Each of these individuals, have different personalities. Some personalities mesh beautifully and others clash. In lodges and Chapters, Councils and Commanderies that are healthy, we find that the relationship is fairly harmonious. In organizations that are dying, we find relationships more acrimonious.

Difficult people require special attention. They are motivated by issues that may not be obvious on the surface. In large organizations, these people are often diluted by the others so they don't have as much power as they do in organizations that are dying. In some cases, these personalities are attracted to dying organizations because they find they can become a big frig in a very small pond. If one is going to rejuvenate a dying lodge or York Rite Body, he must be aware of personalities with problem behaviors and learn to deal with them.

Two Problem Areas to Watch

In any organization whether it is a church, lodge, chapter, council or commandery, or even workplace, groups of people who may become problems fall into two categories: one of those who deal with the money and the other who do the dirty jobs that no one else wants.

A controlling person will often try to take charge of positions like secretary or treasurer, and use it as a power base. They also make comments like "It's not in the budget," "we can't afford it," "we're just wasting our members money." In reality what they are saying is "this gives me the power I need to feel good about myself."

These people are abusers. They may not be physical abusers but they can become verbal abusers.

It is good that there is someone watching the budget. It is also good to have a committee that looks after the finances in the lodge or chapter to be certain that the organization is on the right track. It keeps the Body healthy. So does, having knowledgeable people serve on these committees. After all, if your York Rite Body runs in the red all the time, the money will run out and you will have nothing left and your group will be forced

to close. Unfortunately, individuals that use this as a power base can become very protective of "their" money.

Several things you need to be doing include:

1. Make sure there is a good system of checks and balances on the money.

No one should ever be placed in a position where they are the only signature on an account with no form of supervision. In our various memberships throughout our lives, we have had to deal with treasurers who were stealing from the treasury. Dying organizations can become easy targets because they have usually very few activities. The expenses are very predictable and can be a place where someone could "borrow" money in need. In the church it's referred to as Judas Syndrome because in the New Testament, Judas was treasurer for the disciples and stole money from Jesus. Most of the time, when a situation like this occurs, it begins in innocence. Someone may be laid off from work, unexpected hardship, and they have the temptation to borrow and pay it back. When they can't pay it back, they often dig deeper. At one church, the treasure stole over \$60,000 over 16 years. Others, simply want to hold on to the money because it gives them feeling of great power as they "control this". Everything has to pass through them so it keeps them in the loop. You should always have a good set of checks and balances with a yearly audit. Don't think of it as not trusting your members but rather protecting them from accusations that could arise.

2. Don't put one person in charge of all the money.

In any organization the money should be controlled by several people. Make sure that it takes two signatures to sign checks. Make sure that there are regular finance reports published so they know how much money they have and where the money goes. It is a good idea that you have good treasurer reports at every meeting. You don't have detail every particular item, but is a good idea to make that available in print to show how things are going according to budget.

3. If you are dealing with the situation of misappropriation of funds, gather evidence and confront the person, but never alone.

Have two or three people with you, and sit down and discuss it as brothers. If it is possible work out a repayment program but keep track of everything in case of a lawsuit. In this day and age, people tend to sue even when they are clearly wrong. Use a great deal of caution. Also be careful of gossip. Only give factual information when asked, don't volunteer to people that do not need to know. This protects you in case of a lawsuit. It would probably be a good idea to have a lawyer you could talk to or talk to your grand organization about how to handle a situation like this.

4. If the problem is dealing with somebody who uses this as a power base you may need to replace them on that committee or to find a way to place others there to help dilute the effects.

Don't allow your organization to be hijacked by an individual who feels the need to control the checkbook.

Look around to see if any one person does most of the jobs at the lodge and watch to see what motivates them. The person who controls the unpleasant jobs in an organization often gains a sense of power by feeling indispensable. While some people are very sweat about it, others become very hostile and territorial about their jobs. Those individuals often have a great deal of insecurity and find this kind of work makes them feel like they are needed. These types of individuals are often very good at driving away members.

The best remedy for this situation is to sit down with a cup of coffee and talk to them about this destructive behavior. If they quit, they quit. Someone else can clean the toilets. They need to know where the limits are and also that somebody cares.

LOOKING FOR THE GENERALS

I introduced you to a couple of the "leaders" in any organization. There are also individuals who control the activities of any lodge or York Rite Body. They may not hold an office, but nothing happens without their approval. Some generals are very caring and easy to work with and others can bring problems that you have to deal with.

1. Benevolent General

Plato said the best form of government was the Benevolent King, He saw it as better than a democracy because things get done.

If your particular group has such a benevolent general in leadership, be thankful. The most they require is that someone is in touch with them keeping them informed on what is happening. They will work with you and they will enjoy working with new people.

2. The Bully

These are some of the most difficult people that you will encounter. They usually control by exploding in anger. Much of what motivates these people is a deep dislike for themselves and a feeling of powerlessness. They try to gain power. They do not take criticism well, they feel they are always right but they suffer from great insecurities.

There are a couple of ways to deal with bullies. One is head on. Just like when we were little kids, sometimes the playground bully had to be taken on for the good of all. You may get a few knocks but often if you stand up to them, they will back down.

Another method that sometimes works is sitting down with them and talking to them about their insecurity and fears. Find out why they are Bullies. Ask them what they want. Show them that you care. If the person has destructive tendencies, it is good to listen to them and then back off. The ones that are destructive in nature may have to be put out or be asked to leave. They can quickly destroy an organization. They drive out members. Members may not say much but we have seen churches and lodges where attendance dropped because people leave, not wanting to put up with their behavior.

True leadership learns to control its passions as required of those in a fraternity. Once we learn to subdue our passions, we can become more effective.

"Law and Order"

These are people that always quote the Law book. They are usually not one of the top generals, but they use the Grand Body Law book to gain personal power. Most of the time when they use the Law book to do their work then say, "the Grand Lodge won't let us."

The best defense against these people is to quote the law book yourself and don't take their word for it. I have found out many times that they are wrong or their interpretation is how *they* would stand on something.

Negative leadership is very powerful. With some observation you can pick out the people around you who are negative leaders. It is like the story of the man I heard about who was a member of the Lodge for 40 years. He stood up and said "I am proud to say that I voted against everything that was brought up." These are usually negative leaders.

It is important that we keep our eyes and ears open- and to watch and to watch for negative leadership tendencies you may have. They can sneak in when you least expect them

I hope these suggestions are helpful for you to begin a revitalize your York Rite Bodies, and remember, recruiting is a must.

Membership and Retention is everyone's business.

**EXCERPTS FROM THE GRAND CHAPTER OF FLORIDA
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN- SUBORDINATE CHAPTERS, JURISDICTION**

18.01 JURISDICTION.

When a Master Mason removes permanently from the jurisdiction of a Chapter, its jurisdiction over him terminates immediately and the chapter nearest where he resided cannot receive his petition until after six months residence within its jurisdiction. Consequently, the candidate cannot apply to either Chapter within six months after his removal.

18.02 Work Commenced by Defunct Chapter.

When a petitioner shows satisfactorily that he has taken one or more of the Degrees in a Regular Chapter which has become defunct or dormant, the Chapter within whose jurisdiction her resides, and to which he petitions, may confer the remaining Degrees.

There is no substitute for an all-out campaign to strengthen and build our membership.

Companions, our recruiting efforts are paying off. With two festivals completed for the fall, and two to go, we have already knighted 49 new knights. With Ft Pierce and Tallahassee, we should go well beyond our numbers for last year. Great work.

Membership by Chapter for 2025:

DIST	LOCATION	#	DIST	LOCATION	#
1	Palm Beach (Boca-Delray)	7	6	Cocoa	1
	Ft Lauderdale			Melbourne	
	Miami	1		Fort Pierce	3
2	Manatee/ Bradenton/ Trinity	4	7	Jacksonville	3
	Sarasota/ Venice/ Fort Myers	6		Fernandina	2
				Palatka	6
3	Tampa (Ivanhoe)	2	8	Lake City	
	St. Petersburg (Sunshine)	1		Middleburg	1
	Clearwater (Springtime)	1		Gainesville	1
4	Lakeland	1	9	Tallahassee	
	Plant City	5		Marianna	
	Sebring (Highlands)	2		Panama City	
5	Daytona (Halifax)	5	10	Fort Walton Beach	
	Lake Sumter	6		Crestview	
	Sanford			Pensacola	
	Orlando	2			

REMINDER: MASONIC MEMBERSHIP SOLUTIONS (MMS) RULES STATE THAT NEW COMPANIONS AND SIR KNIGHTS NEED TO BE PLACED IN MMS WITHIN 15 DAYS. If this is not done, the magazine will not be sent automatically. The Secretary will have to contact Grand Encampment.

MMS IS NOW ON GOOGLE CHROME

New Membership by York Rite District 2025:

DIST	DATE	LOCATION	KNIGHTED
1			
2			
3	1 & 8 Mar 25 Oct 25	Tampa (2), Plant City (5), Lakeland (1), Sebring (2), Orlando (2), Lake Sumter (2), Manatee (4), Ft Myers (6), St Petersburg (1), Clearwater (1)	26
4			
5			
6	28-29 Mar 14-15 Sep 25	Ft Pierce (3), Tallahassee (1), WPB(Boca-Delray) (6), Palatka (1)	12
7	8 & 15 Feb	Palatka (5), Jacksonville (3), Gainesville (1), Miami (1), Lake Sumter (4), Daytona (5), Middleburg (1), Fernandina Beach (2), Cocoa (1)	23
8			
9	Mar 25	Tallahassee	
10			
TOTAL 2025 KNIGHTINGS			61
TOTAL 2024 KNIGHTINGS			76

Also, as soon as your area determines the dates for the Spring Festival, **PLEASE** let me know so they may be included.

Fraternally,

Henry A. Adams
HENRY A. ADAMS, KYGCH

Every Christian Mason Should Be A Knight Templar"

Some excerpts, from the Grand Commanders Handbook, published by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States, reprint from Aug 2009, intro. and Grand Commandery of Florida, Beaderstadt, Jon L. " Making Members" pp 73-75, and from the Grand Commanders Handbook given to the Grand Line Officers. Membership Development, Grand Encampment, 2003-2006

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