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# Mentoring

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER OF ROSE CROIX ORATION

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This evening I would like to discuss a subject that is a never-ending topic of discussion amongst us. That is the concept of mentoring, however I am going to approach it from a different perspective. I will also take it a little beyond basic mentoring.

Earlier this year my wife and I were in Abilene, Kansas and visited the Eisenhower Library and Museum. As we were leaving through the gift shop a stack of books on a table caught my attention. After taking a second look I knew I had to have it. The title was, "The Presidents Club: Inside the World's Most Exclusive Fraternity."

This club goes back informally to Washington, Adams, and Jefferson. However, I am going to discuss the modern club. The book focuses on the rivalries, friendships, and power of the men who sit as the most powerful leaders in the world.

I am sure that when I finish the book there will be many more fascinating details, but the introduction was more than I needed for my purpose tonight. The knowledge gained in the narrative of this book is something I think we are all aware of, but seldom ponder because it is politics and after a while it all seems to run together.

The club was formed as kind of a security detail. The former Presidents see the club as a vital and surprising benefit to their post presidential years. Upon leaving office they relinquish their power, but not their influence and this influence becomes a part of the power of the sitting President. They accomplish more together than apart. So as needed they join together, to "consult, complain, console, pressure, protect, and redeem."

They are judged for their performances, both successes and failures. However, judgment is different than understanding. What he does matters most, but why he does it is his privilege of history. "To the extent that we learn about these men by watching the way they engage their peers – the loyalty, the rivalry, the pity, and the partnerships – the club opens a new window into the Oval Office."

Most everyone is aware of the rivalries and obvious dislikes of the campaigns, but let me give you a couple of examples of the presidential after life.

Truman and Hoover (a failed president) were mortal enemies. After World War 2 Truman was faced with the rebuilding of Europe and the overhaul of the Presidency to bring it into the modern and nuclear age. He knew that Hoover, because of his similar activities after W/W1, had the knowledge, experience, and stature to accomplish these tasks. When asked, Hoover gladly accepted these tasks and was able to restore his standing and legacy. They became the best of friends for the rest of their lives.

When Kennedy was killed, Johnson who was not particularly friendly with Eisenhower called Ike and told him, "I need you more than ever now." Ike drove to Washington and on a legal pad in the Oval Office, wrote out how he thought Johnson should address a joint session of Congress. Johnson later told Ike he was the best Chief of Staff any President could have.

Bush 41 who was handily defeated by Clinton, left a hand written note on the desk in the Oval Office stating, "You will be President when you read this note...I am rooting hard for you." Once Johnson gave Ike a pair of gold cuff links bearing the Presidential Seal and commented that he and Truman were the only two men who could legitimately wear them. Then Johnson remarked, "but if you look closely, it doesn't say Democrat or Republican."

In 1993 Clinton's Club consisted of the resources, skills, and knowledge of Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush 41. This was the largest the club had ever been. In 2008 following the Inauguration of Obama, five of the Past Presidents met Obama at the White House, and as Carter put it, "to educate President Obama in a nice way, without preaching to him."

At this point I am going to refer to the Blue Lodge for simplicity, as there are so many bodies with so many Titles for the leader in the East. Keep in mind that what I am about to discuss should apply to any and all Officer Lines. First of all we are a Fraternity which experiences many of the same problems just mentioned, obviously not near the level of concern or seriousness. However, we are a body of men, whom I would guess, that a very large number of which are Type A personalities. As such we experience the same rivalries, likes, and dislikes, which does not always allow for "Peace and Harmony."

Three things struck me as I read:

First, being that all ex-Presidents, in one-way or the other mentored the sitting President. If men at the highest level of leadership in the country recognize the importance of mentoring, then it seems to me that at our level we should certainly take notice and take it serious for the benefit of all of us as individuals as well as for the Fraternity. I am sure that many of you are aware and some are not, but it has been my experience when mentoring or training, that you learn as much as much as you teach. And that is never-ending and obviously to the benefit of the mentor and the new member, as well as to the Fraternity.

Second, as with the Presidents, as the Master leaves the East, he has given up his power, but not his influence. He should have gained much greater knowledge of the workings of the Lodge as well as the Fraternity, and as such has become an asset to both. He should now realize the importance of the support and respect of his peers to his success.

Third, there are always going to be rivalries, personality issues, personal dislikes, etc. But the Past Masters should work together to help, by mentoring, to overcome these types of issues.

Each Master at some point receives his Past Master's Degree, which is not much more than some rules, an obligation, and other particulars, and is almost always impersonal at best.

I believe that as in 2008, when the ex-presidents met informally with Obama, that Lodges and other bodies should seriously consider this concept. It would never hurt for a few Past Masters to sit down informally with the incoming Master and have a casual conversation. To answer questions or concerns the new Master may have, but most importantly to assure him that he has the support and respect of his peers, and that they will always be at the ready as the need arises to assist and prepared to carry out and complete any project that is needed. This may be difficult for all to do

from year to year, but we must remember that it is our duty and obligation for the benefit of the success of the Lodge and the Fraternity. They have to remind him that they all sat in that chair and are very aware of the path that his journey in the East is about to embark upon.

Within our body here, it is the duty of the first line signer to mentor his candidate. If he has more than one it is also his duty to find someone to mentor the other or others. It is unacceptable to sign a petition once or twice a year and never be seen for any event at the Consistory. If a member has no intention of attending, then maybe he should find someone who attends regularly, is willing to mentor the candidate and have him be the first line signer.

If we do not teach and get them involved, we lose them. It is so very important that we continue to discuss the meaning and value of the lessons taught during their Reunion, encourage them to attend the next Reunion to continue their education, to constantly remind them of the many opportunities available to them to get involved and participate in. They must understand that every time they are here, and everything they participate in, is a constant learning opportunity.

This is the way we keep them and this is our obligation.

Thank you!!