

it may not be that funny anyway! By all means join in the general merriment when and if it follows!

### *The reply to the Visitors Toast*

If you are visiting a Lodge, particularly so if it is in another country, then BE PREPARED because you are likely to be called upon. If you have done your homework then the speech will be easy for you. The Brethren will want to know about your Lodge and District – tell them. Comment on any interesting variations in the Ritual, but always in a complimentary way. Congratulate the Candidate of the evening on his progress if a degree has been worked and in the case of an Initiate on his entry into the whole wide world of Masonry. For the Installation of a new Master wish him on behalf of all the visitors the happiest of years in the Chair of King Solomon.

### *The Toast to the Initiate.*

This is undoubtedly the most important Toast of the evening and should be approached with due care. First impressions are all important, and to a large extent the newcomer's impressions of Freemasonry will be coloured by what is said to him on this occasion.

By the time that the Initiate reaches the Festive Board he has passed through a series of experiences which have probably impressed him deeply, but which he little understands. Therefore some hint should be given to him which will enable him to realise that the ceremony has a very definite meaning, and one which it is his duty to unravel. Many a good Mason has been lost to the cause just for the lack of a little guidance and help at the start, and therefore the Proposer of the Toast would be well advised to seize the opportunity thus offered to explain at least in outline the meaning of the ceremony, or the moral lessons it inculcates.

Stress should be laid on the privileges afforded by ones membership and the lessons taught by the earlier Charge in Lodge. It is always of interest for the brethren to learn something of the Initiate's background.

Produced by the District of Cyprus Mentoring Team - August 2012  
dgmentor@cyprus-freemasons.org.cy



## District of Cyprus Mentoring Programme

### A series of Fact Sheets for a Master Mason

## MM 07 Masonic Speechmaking



# Making a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge

## *Masonic Speechmaking*

To some, speechmaking comes naturally, but for others it can be a daunting experience. Masonry offers you the opportunity to develop and hone your speechmaking skills and indeed they can thereafter be used to your advantage in the wider world outside Masonry. Fortunately, there are a few basic guidelines that can help in making a good speech, and the most important for success is the one word – **preparation**

**Preparation** It is always a good idea to rough out your speech under a number of headings. Then write it out in full and then recondense it under headings. If you read your speech then it will lose much of its spontaneity and the result is likely to come over as lacklustre and dull. Also with your head down the throat is restricted and voice projection is lost. Do not have the whole speech in front of you and do not read it. Instead make sure that your notes are on small cards, unobtrusive and numbered.

**Length of speech.** As a rule speeches should be relatively short, but not so short that they contain nothing interesting or new. About five minutes is the maximum time to aim for.

**The opening.** Go straight to the point; do not hesitate or ramble. A good start commands immediate interest. For example ‘WM, Bro Wardens, brethren; it is my pleasure to propose the toast to our visitors’.

**Lead up to the climax.** Do not try to include too many points in one speech; concentrate on a single theme and make everything lead up to a climax - then sit down! Many a good speech is ruined by an anti-climax and a feeble conclusion.

**Study your audience.** Before you get on your feet study your audience. Do not try funny stories with a serious atmosphere. On the other hand be careful not to be too “spiritual” when the atmosphere of the gathering is distinctly jovial. Remember, none but a born orator can change the “atmosphere” of a room in the space of one short speech.

**Delivery.** When you rise to your feet look round the room, smile, take a deep breath and away you go. Do look at the person you are toasting. From the top table address your remarks to the JW, then swivel your head to the SW and back to the JW. Vary your gaze to include those immediately in front and those on either side. If you are in the body of the room leave your place and stand between the Wardens. Let your gaze traverse the top table as you speak from one end to the other and back again. You will find that if you do not adopt this technique your remarks will tend to be directed to one half of the room leaving the other half feeling somewhat neglected. Keep an eye on those brethren furthest from you. If they begin to shuffle or whisper it probably means that they cannot hear you and so are losing interest.

**Enunciation and articulation.** Open your mouth wide, most speakers mumble. Watch a professional singer and see how they open their mouth. Practice your speech in front of a mirror. Practice speaking aloud which will give you confidence.



**Avoid platitudes.** Beware of such phrases as “WM you have taken my breath away; I had no idea when I sat down that you would expect a speech from me!” Such phrases are signs of incompetence, and in any case do not make excuses. Every Master Mason should begin to prepare a few suitable speeches which he can give at a moments notice. Never say that your evening’s enjoyment has been spoilt by you being called upon to make a speech. Some may think that it sounds funny. It is not! It is probably untrue, and undoubtedly rude!

**The use of stories.** Refrain from telling a story unless you can relate it to the theme of your speech. Nothing is more feeble than to reel off a story which one has read in a comic paper and which has no connection with the subject of the speech. Remember that religion and politics are taboo subjects, as are sexual stories. Never apologise for your anecdotes and do not laugh at your own joke, particularly when you are relating to it, as