

The Chief Strength and Support

by **Sir Knight Philip G. Buchholz** - Grand Commander of Wyoming

Our fraternity is an interesting collection of individuals hailing from different backgrounds, individuals with different personalities, priorities, and philosophies coming together to support one another and to watch out for each other and our families. This community of support requires significant commitment and dedication on the part of its members. This labor is often very challenging and difficult.

I am continually reminded of the need for that constant effort on my part to contribute to maintaining the peace and harmony of the fraternity. There are times when the most casual comment or statement strikes a nerve, and I must remind myself that to be offended is a choice I make. To allow another to offend me is the result of my not regulating my life agreeable to the dictates of reason, failing to wisely determine upon things relative to the peace and harmony of the fraternity. I must stop and remind myself to take the time to apply "liberal lenient tolerant judgment" and to recognize "the best possible construction on the characteristics or actions of others." I must continually direct myself to be prudent and tolerant, to extend true Masonic charity by presuming that the individual intended no ill will and that the individual was most likely only stating a fact or opinion with which I did not agree or which was philosophically opposed to my own. That does not make the individual wrong; it does not make me wrong; it only makes us different.

Variety is one of the greatest assets in our fraternity, it would indeed be a dull and stagnant group of individuals if we all thought alike, if we never disagreed on anything. Likewise, our style of communication varies, what one considers a whisper, the recipient may interpret as a scream, one may be too succinct while the other too verbose; however, in most cases, each has an important message they are attempting to communicate. If, because of the constraints of time or situation, that individual failed to invest the time and effort to camouflage the message with glowing superlatives in an attempt to gain my approval or agreement, that technique does not make them wrong, because it may not have been the way I would have done it, again it only makes us different. I believe we must look past the delivery and find the message, or we will lose an opportunity to learn from each other, to improve ourselves, to grow and prosper mentally and philosophically through our association and social intercourse with each other.

I freely admit that my efforts to subdue my passions and conform to the methods of thought and behavior outlined above are not always successful; it is an on-going work in progress, but I shall continue to persevere. I must accept that the level of the fraternal bond is not universally constant, the variety in our values, priorities, philosophies, and personalities are very influential factors which contribute greatly to that level of fraternal bond. As mere mortal beings we must be willing to accept the fact that we will always be closer to some than to others. I am especially

thankful for that special bond which I share with a few very special individuals, and I feel no need to apologize for that bond.

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