



NUGGET

Thought about becoming a Freemason? According to Fred & Charlie



Summary: *What would be in it for me?*

While their wives were shopping, Fred and Charlie escaped for a quiet coffee.

Bob, an old army colleague of Charlie's, sat alone at a table. After the usual pleasantries, Bob finally confessed that these days he felt at a loose end, explaining, *'The kids have grown up and the wife is heavily involved in the community centre. Never thought I'd say this but I do miss the old regiment, the banter in the mess, those 'rumbles' overseas, and to be honest, the sense of belonging, and being one of the gang. I really miss my mates.'*

Charlie and Fred glanced at each other. Fred enquired conversationally whether Bob had ever thought about joining a local society such as Rotary, the Lions... or the Freemasons?

'Don't know much about them,' Bob reflected. *'They're a bit too self-centred aren't they, just competing to raise the largest fund for good causes? Not sure about the Masons either, going around with rolled up trouser legs and running the local council. Not really my scene.'*

'Well,' said Charlie, *'Fred and I are Freemasons, Fred has been one for thirty years. If there was anything off-side about Masonry you can be sure we'd have resigned like a shot.'*

'Your platoon was rubbish,' Bob retorted with quiet respect and affection, *'but you knew your stuff and always bought your round at the bar, I'll say that for you. Tell me more, chaps, I might be interested. What would be in it for me?'*

Fred took over.

'Men become Freemasons for all sorts of reasons, but some would say their Lodge offers them great camaraderie and good-humoured company after a hard day at the office. There is a sense of purpose. You are accepted for who you are, rich or poor, young or old, not for the size of your wallet.'

'Many groups do fund-raising,' Bob reflected, *'and seem to do it well. The Lions often get a mention in the local rag. What makes the Freemasons so different?'*

'Could be,' said Fred, 'that for those other clubs the financial target matters, not the members themselves? Freemasonry starts and ends with its members and it's the members who put their hands in their pockets rather than rattling buckets at the shopping centre. The Lodge is merely where we meet and fund-raising is just one aspect of our charity.'

'Our principles are simple: Friendship, Charity, a natural compassion towards anyone in need and Integrity, the courage to do what is right. We remind ourselves of these guidelines at each meeting by acting out morality plays. These draw on symbols, and involve Old Testament characters familiar to the old stonemasons. We take great pride in these mediaeval roots. In fact, Freemasons have been part of the community for so long the public have even adopted our phrases: a past master, on the level, an upright citizen, and given the third degree, they're all from Freemasonry.'

'That's very interesting', Bob mused. 'If I wanted to join what would happen next?'

'Well' said Fred, 'Lodges meet with different regularity and are often based on their members having different shared interests. There are subs to pay, but they're a lot less than the golf club. Our particular Lodge meets about eight times a year, but we would find you a Lodge that suits you. You'd meet a couple of chaps from the Lodge committee, they'd have a chat and, if successful, you will be initiated; a memorable Ceremony which sets the scene.'

'After a period of simply enjoying the company of your colleagues, you'll be invited to join the team to act out the morality plays. This involves learning a few lines off by heart but leads to a better understanding of the words and their meaning. Another reward is often a life-long bond with your team members.'

'But isn't Freemasonry some sort of religion?' asked Bob.

'By no means' said Charlie.

'We accept the concept of a Creator but there are no religious rites or ceremonies at any of our meetings.'

'But where is the fun in this, Charlie?' said Bob. 'It all sounds pretty serious!'

'When the formality is over, we relax at the bar or over a good dinner and we keep it light-hearted. Our wives and partners are also encouraged to become involved in our social programme; outings, meals together and visits' replied Charlie.

Fred concluded, 'If you're interested, why don't you and Pam come along as our guests to our next Lodge social evening. You can meet our members and their partners. You may be surprised to see Freemasons that don't actually display hairy legs and flexible fingers, but merely a very broad smile of welcome!'



Recommended use of Nuggets

Nuggets offer a short, simple and readily absorbed means of progressing Masonic knowledge and an easy way to introduce learning to Lodges and Chapters. It is hoped that they will become a regular feature of Lodge and Chapter meetings as well as a source for private-study.

Nuggets can be included as an item in the summons and read at most Lodge/Chapter meetings. They can be:

Read by either a new or an experienced Mason with the minimum of preparation and practice; though ideally, they need to be read a few times beforehand.

Themed with the meeting or activity.

Used to initiate a discussion within a Lodge/Chapter, LOI/COI, or group.

Read at home and shared as a topic for a future discussion.

Used as a focus for an unplanned, informal discussion.

*Note: All biblical passages are taken from the Authorized King James version and any reference to ritual will be from Emulation unless otherwise specified.

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Fred and Charlie character drawings courtesy of Eddie Wildman.

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