

# A GUIDELINE ON DISCUSSING MEMBERSHIP IN FREEMASONRY



What may I say?  
What should I say?

**FRIEND TO FRIEND**

## **THE QUESTION OF SOLICITATION**

The matter of asking others to join Freemasonry, which we term “solicitation” is a perplexing problem to many of our members and deserves clarification.

While there may be no written ordinance that prohibits solicitation, there is an established principle that discourages direct recruitment. Improper solicitation, is specifically forbidden. This long-standing tradition, probably unique to our Order, has become an unwritten rule. To become a Mason, you must first ask a Mason! This certainly sets us apart from most other clubs, societies and similar organizations.

This Masonic tradition of non-solicitation has stood the test of time for more than two hundred years, and there are valid reasons for continuing to observe it. The tradition allows an applicant to sign his application, and later respond to the question on improper solicitation honestly without any hesitation or doubt. An

applicant should never be pressured into submitting a petition, because subsequently, he may be resentful of the person who talked him into it.

However, our ancient tradition of non-solicitation should not be interpreted as a prohibition to discussing Freemasonry with others. We should feel free to do so, especially with members of the family or friends, neighbours, colleagues, associates, and workmates who express a genuine interest in our Order. Neither should we be hesitant about arousing the interest of someone considered to be a suitable and potential applicant by sharing our enthusiasm for Freemasonry. Sons, sons-in-law, grandsons, and nephews of Freemasons may be potentially interested in Freemasonry. Remember, as a member of the Craft, each one of us is someone's idea of a Freemason. There is no objection to evaluating attitude or determining interest in such a manner that we do not overtly solicit membership. When a certain point is reached, the potential applicant should be left to make his own decision, inviting him to reopen the discussion at any time in the future. We may later remind him, but no more than once, of his apparent interest.

When a nonmember shows an interest, or inquired about the nature and objectives of Freemasonry - its history, philosophy, or activities - a Freemason need not remain silent, and should never be evasive. He may properly explain the qualifications and commitment required for membership, and outline the application procedure and process, should the situation warrant. If there is an interest in joining, it should be explained that no invitations are extended by Freemasonry but assistance is readily available to the serious enquirer. The first step might be to provide the pamphlets "What is Freemasonry?" and "Friend to Friend."

Invite and personally escort him to the annual "Friend to Friend Night" in your Lodge or an "Open House" in the District.

Freemasonry does not go out seeking members - Men must come seeking Freemasonry. We must be ready and willing to share the privileges of Freemasonry with worthy men who ask and seek. Each situation is unique. The circumstances and the member's relationship with the potential applicant will help us differentiate between "improper solicitation" and supplying straight answers to honest questions. In every instance, however, the future prospects for a rewarding Masonic journey are much brighter for all concerned when the candidate can say with sincerity that he came to Freemasonry of his own free will seeking admission to our mysteries and privileges.

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