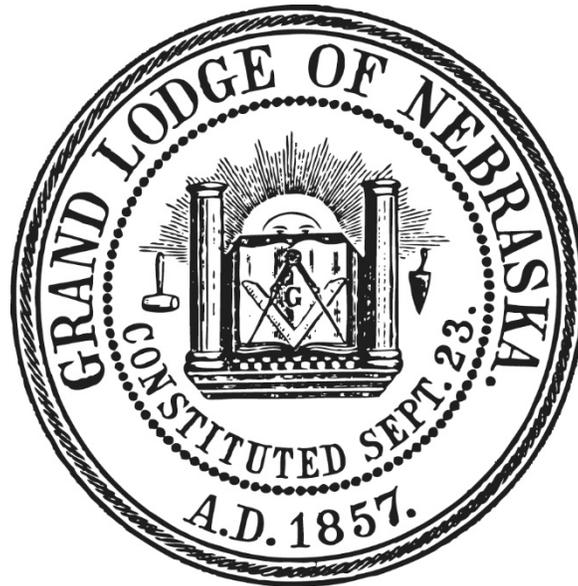


Lodge Operations Manual



**Grand Lodge
Ancient Free & Accepted Masons
Of Nebraska**

Prepared by the
Lodge Leadership Committee

2018

“...one thing and only one thing a
Masonic lodge can give its
members which they can get
nowhere else in the world.

That one thing is
Masonry.”

Brother Carl H. Claudy

American and Masonic, author, magazine writer, and journalist for the New York Herald

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INTRODUCTION

This Grand Lodge *Lodge Operations Manual* is intended to help you with many questions you might have about how to lead your lodge. It is definitely not intended to answer every question or situation you might encounter. It is strongly suggested you obtain and read copies of Grand Lodge Bylaws, your lodge's bylaws, and the Grand Lodge *Lodge Leadership Manual* for further sources of information. You should know that you can always ask any of your lodge officers a question and they should either know the answer or be well-versed enough with Freemasonry to know where to find the answer. If your lodge officer cannot answer your question it is suggested you contact the Grand Lodge Office. Your opportunity to grow in Masonry will be limited if you do not read and ask questions.

This Manual is the result of consolidation of a number of previously published Grand Lodge leadership documents into one document. Thereby placing all operational aspects of leading a lodge into one document.

Leadership is very difficult to define across various different situations. The leadership required by a military commander to send troops into harm's way is vastly different than that of an employer directing his people in their day-to-day jobs, or even that of a Worshipful Master in a lodge of volunteers organizing a blood drive.

In Masonry we concern ourselves with leading volunteers. It is a far more difficult task to motivate volunteers because there is no threat of imprisonment, or loss of job if they fail to follow "orders". The Masonic leader must determine what each brother's motivations will be and then tailor his message and approach to reach and fulfill that need or desire. In all situations, leaders must conduct themselves in such a manner as to have people want to follow them. If the leader fails to do so, there will soon be nobody left to follow him, and thus no need for a leader.

The Grand Lodge Lodge Leadership Committee hopes that you find this Manual helpful to assist you as you prepare for and execute your year in the East. If you have suggestions to help improve it in any way, feel free to contact the Grand Lodge Lodge Leadership Committee via the Grand Lodge Office. Your help will be very much appreciated.

LODGE OFFICER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Most subordinate lodge officers are part of a "progressive line," which is also known as "going through the chairs"...or sometimes called the Masonic Officer Chairs. This line of succession moves up one position at a time from one year to the next. Such advancement is not automatic and should be earned. Remember, leadership is a responsibility, not a reward. Being in charge should not be the goal of a leader, but rather his aim should be to lead with good character and effectiveness.

The elected lodge officers are: Worshipful Master, Senior and Junior Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary. All other officers are appointed by the Worshipful Master.

If there are no changes to the line for any reason, seven years from the time of becoming Junior Steward, it is anticipated the Brother will arrive at the chair of the Worshipful Master.

The subordinate lodge officer progression is as follows: Junior Steward, Senior Steward, Junior Deacon, Senior Deacon, Junior Warden, Senior Warden, and Worshipful Master. The other elected and appointed officers are not part of the progressive line, and thus are elected or appointed to one-year terms.

There are certain requirements incumbent upon all lodge officers. In addition to those specifically mentioned in the respective officer responsibility descriptions, all officers, both elected and appointed should:

1. Attend all lodge meetings and functions
2. Attend Schools of Instruction
3. Attend One-Day degree conferrals
4. Attend area meetings
5. Perform any and all duties as tasked by the Worshipful Master or Nebraska Grand Lodge Officers.

Many lodges have, over time, altered some of these duties and responsibilities to satisfy their specific circumstances. Often these requirements are addressed within each individual lodge's bylaws.

Worshipful Master

The Worshipful Master of a Masonic Lodge is the highest ranking of all lodge officers. HE IS RESPONSIBLE AND IN CHARGE. That being said, he is only elevated for a short time by the Brethren of the Lodge, will soon be replaced, and will no longer be elevated. The Jewel of his office is the Square, which is a stonemason's tool to ascertain true and correct angles of the cut and smoothed stone...thus his Jewel symbolizes virtue.

The Worshipful Master sits in the East of the lodge room (symbolic of the Rising Sun in the East) and directs all the business of the Lodge. Even if the building faces a different direction, the Master is always said to be "in the East". He presides over the business of the lodge, degree ritual, and ceremonies.

He is the Masonic equivalent of the President or CEO of a company and assumes financial oversight for the lodge's finances. It is his further duty to delegate responsibilities and duties to all lodge officers and committees.

The Worshipful Master opens the Lodge for all business and degree work. Thus, a successful Worshipful Master should be proficient in his ritual duties and able to adequately perform degree work. The Senior Warden, Junior Warden, or a Past Master are also permitted to function as the Worshipful Master and open a Lodge if required.

The Worshipful Master is the only Brother allowed to wear a hat when lodge is open. Religious head coverings, such as a yarmulke, are NOT considered hats.

While Freemasons call the Master, "Worshipful Master", they do not, as some people erroneously believe, actually worship him. "Worshipful" is an honorary title which shows respect for his position. In France, the word "Worshipful" is replaced with the word "Venerable". It is the equivalent of addressing a judge as "Your Honor".

It is also his responsibility to ensure scheduled periodic communications with all brethren in the manner of his choosing. It is further his duty to ensure all brethren are provided frequent, and appropriate Masonic education.

The Lodge's real estate and equipment are important assets and must be properly maintained. This is the responsibility of the Master in the absence of a Board of Trustees or Temple Craft. Each Worshipful Master should ascertain that his Lodge is protected by adequate insurance coverage at all times. Partial or total destruction of Lodge property by fire, windstorm, or other natural forces, is an ever present danger; each lodge is required by the Bylaws of the Grand Lodge to obtain suitable insurance against loss by fire on its real and personal property, even if the lodge does not own a building.

The Worshipful Master is ultimately responsible for everything that occurs within his lodge during his year as Master; his word is final on all actions pertaining to his lodge. All eyes are upon the Master. If lodge functions go smoothly, it is the Master who receives much of the credit. If lodge functions go awry, it is the Master who will bear the brunt of the blame.

Responsibility to the Community

Civic and community relations are important to the lodge and to the Fraternity. They are maintained most effectively by the individual Mason who reflects his Masonic training in his daily life and who does his duty as a good citizen.

As a lodge, we also need to be good citizens in our communities. Define a need in your community, and then determine what it is that your lodge can do to help satisfy that need.

Permissible Public Functions

There are certain Masonic Ceremonies to which the public may be invited. They include installation of officers; 25, 50, 55, 60, 65, and 70-year pin presentations; memorial services; funerals; and cornerstone and dedication ceremonies, to name a few. Some of these ceremonies may be held in the Temple, or at other locations, but all afford good opportunities to showcase Freemasonry to the public.

Relationship to Other Masonic and Appendant Bodies

The Worshipful Master should extend fraternal courtesies and cooperation to other Masonic and appendant bodies. He should remember that the welfare of the Symbolic Lodge must be his first consideration. When Temple facilities are shared with other bodies all meetings should be well coordinated with those bodies. To avoid strife and discord proper use of all Temple facilities, and responsibility therefore, should be understood by all parties involved.

Senior Warden

The Senior Warden's Jewel of office is the Level which is a stonemason's instrument for ensuring the alignment of a horizontal service is perfectly level. Symbolically it reminds us that as Masons we all meet on the level, without regard to Masonic, social, political, or financial position in life.

The Senior Warden of a Masonic Lodge is the second in command of the lodge, and he sits in the West (symbolic of the setting sun) to assist the Worshipful Master in opening and closing the Lodge.

In the absence of the Worshipful Master, the Senior Warden may assume the Worshipful Master's duties. If the Worshipful Master is absent, the Senior Warden is in charge of the lodge and assumes all the powers and duties of the Worshipful Master.

The Senior Warden is in charge of the lodge when it is at labor. In this instance, he has received orders from the Worshipful Master to "take charge of the door" which means that any brother entering or retiring from the lodge room must report to and salute him rather than the Worshipful Master to gain admission to the lodge.

The Senior Warden is responsible for the mentoring of all new candidates by selecting competent Masonic Education mentors, and ensuring all candidates are progressing at a reasonable rate.

Since it is supposed the Senior Warden will ascend to the Worshipful Master's chair he should be constantly planning his time when he will lead the lodge to improve the likelihood of success. Time and care should be taken to prepare the calendar for his year as Master, set goals, and create a well-thought out list of members to head up each of the Masonic lodges committees during his tenure as Master and also consider Brethren to serve as appointed officers.

After receiving the lodge's annual audit report from the Lodge Audit Committee, it is the responsibility of the Senior Warden to request the Budget Committee prepare an estimated budget for his upcoming year as Master.

Junior Warden

The Junior Warden's Jewel of office is the Plumb, which is a stonemason's instrument used for ascertaining the alignment of a vertical surface is exactly 90 degrees. Symbolically it represents upright behavior among Masons.

The Junior Warden of a Masonic Lodge is the third in command of the lodge. The Junior Warden sits in the South (symbolic of the position of the sun at midday) and is responsible for the Brethren while the lodge is at ease or refreshment.

He may succeed to the station of the Senior Warden in the absence of that officer. If the Worshipful Master and Senior Warden are both absent, the Junior Warden is in charge of the lodge with all the powers and duties of the Worshipful Master.

It is his responsibility alone to prefer charges against a Mason suspected of un-Masonic conduct (which are listed in the Grand Lodge Constitution and Bylaws) and present such charges to the Master of the Lodge.

The Junior Warden supervises the Stewards, and thus, is responsible for all refreshments served at the Lodge. Symbolically, it is also his duty to make certain that the members do not convert their refreshment into intemperance or excess. In many U.S. jurisdictions, including Nebraska, alcohol is barred from the lodge building when the lodge is at labor.

Senior Deacon

Both Deacons carry rods, atop which are the jewels of their respective offices. The Senior Deacon's rod is topped with a Square and Compass, with the Sun in the center. His position is on the right of the Worshipful Master in the East.

It is his duty to assist the Worshipful Master and carry orders between the Worshipful Master and the Senior Warden and elsewhere about the lodge as the Worshipful Master may direct. During ritual degrees he receives the candidate and conducts him around the lodge room. He also conducts the candidate for proficiency examinations.

The Senior Deacon's principle roles are to welcome and accommodate visiting Brethren into the lodge and introduce all distinguished visitors if those duties are not assigned to the Marshal.

During the opening and closing ceremonies, the Senior Deacon is tasked to open the Book of Holy Scriptures to the correct passage for the degree in which the lodge is open and then close the Book as the lodge is closed. He also lights and extinguishes the Three Lesser Lights at the Altar.

It is the Senior Deacon's responsibility alone to carry the ballot box around the lodge to allow all qualified Brethren present to ballot on the petitioning candidate.

Junior Deacon

The Jewel of the Junior Deacon is the Square and Compass. However, the Junior Deacon's Square and Compass has a moon in the center which signifies that he is in the West.

The Junior Deacon of a Masonic Lodge is an assistant officer of the lodge, and sits on the right of the Senior Warden.

The Junior Deacon's principle roles are to assist the Senior Warden by carrying messages from the Senior Warden in the West to the Junior Warden in the South and elsewhere about the Lodge and he may direct and to guard the inner door of the Lodge. (i.e., to see that the lodge is duly tyled)

It is his duty to ascertain at all times whether the Tyler is guarding the door and only allowing visitors to enter after they have been properly vouched for. The Junior Deacon and the Tyler communicate with each other by knocking on the door (the Tyler from the outside...and the Junior Deacon from the inside). After the Tyler has knocked, the Junior Deacon rises at his place, picks up his rod, and then informs the Worshipful Master that "there is an alarm at the door." If the Worshipful Master gives his permission to attend to the alarm, the Junior Deacon will open the door, find out what has caused the alarm, close the door, report his discoveries to the Worshipful Master, and await further orders from the Worshipful Master. If the Worshipful Master is occupied, during certain parts of degree work or if the Lodge is still being opened the Junior Deacon will return the Tyler's three knocks with just one of his own, thereby informing the Tyler to wait for a while, then try again. If the Worshipful Master has turned over control of the door to the Senior Warden then he would be responsible for directing the Junior Deacon to admit or deny visitors. The Junior Deacon should also inform all Brethren entering the lodge room after the lodge is opened what degree the lodge is in and who to report to.

Senior Steward

Both Stewards carry rods similar to those carried by the Deacons. Both Steward's rods are topped with a cornucopia. The cornucopia signifies the "Horn of Plenty". It is a goat horn filled with the fresh fruits and vegetables to denote the "fruits of your labors" and represents a job well done.

The Senior Steward is tasked to understudy the Junior Deacon's position and fill in for the Junior Deacon in his absence.

The Senior Steward's principle role is to prepare the candidates during ritual, escort them to the lodge room, and assist the Senior Deacon. The Senior Steward supervises and assists the Junior Steward in handling kitchen duties and acting as wait staff for the members. The stewards also share responsibility to:

1. Keep the Preparation Room clean and organized
2. Have all necessary equipment ready and available for use.
3. Assist the Senior Deacon in properly preparing the lodge room.

Good Stewards contribute greatly to the fellowship and camaraderie of a Lodge!

Junior Steward

Like the Senior Steward, the Junior Steward carries a rod topped with a Cornucopia.

The Junior Steward is tasked to understudy the Senior Steward position and fill in for the Senior Steward in his absence. The Junior Steward's principle role is to assist the Senior Steward and the Senior Deacon in the preparation of the Candidates. He also assists the Senior Steward in handling kitchen duties and both Stewards function as the wait staff for the members. This is a position requiring much dedication and service to the Craft. The stewards also share responsibility to:

1. Keep the Preparation Room clean and organized
2. Have all necessary equipment ready and available for use.
3. Assist the Senior Deacon in properly preparing the lodge room.

Good Stewards contribute greatly to the fellowship and camaraderie of a Lodge!

Secretary

The Secretary is the Lodge's Recorder, and so it is only fitting that his Jewel is the crossed pens.

His duties require him to handle all correspondence to and from the lodge, keep the minutes of lodge meetings, process petitions of new candidates, maintain a continuous lodge member count, and many other administrative duties.

He compiles an ongoing list of each new candidate and records which degrees that candidate has completed. From his member list, he sends out the annual dues notices and receives dues payments. It is his responsibility to see that all lodge funds received are transferred safely and

promptly to the Treasurer. He also submits annual and monthly reports to the Grand Lodge on the lodge's activities.

The Secretary communicates with other lodges and the Grand Lodge, using several forms of communication such as e-mails and written correspondence.

A very experienced Brother usually resides in this chair and he is often a Past Master of the Lodge. The ideal Lodge Secretary will possess and demonstrate a high degree of lodge experience, Masonic knowledge, diplomacy and, above all, detailed paperwork skills. The Lodge Secretary is the backbone of any Masonic Lodge and holds a position of great responsibility. He sits to the left of the Worshipful Master in the East. A good Secretary can help make the Worshipful Master's job much easier.

The Secretary's Lodge Officer duties are many, not the least of which is that he must be well versed in Grand Lodge Bylaws for his jurisdiction and his lodge bylaws. He maintains a roster of lodge members and helps the Master organize his meetings.

The Secretary has many other critical duties which are more fully addressed in the Grand Lodge of Nebraska's *Secretary's Handbook*.

A good secretary will always remember his first task is to observe the Worshipful Master's will and pleasure.

Treasurer

The Treasurer's Jewel is a Pair of Crossed Keys, signifying he is the Collector and Distributor of all lodge funds.

The Treasurer of a Masonic Lodge is the Chief Financial Officer of the lodge. He sits on the right of the Worshipful Master in the East.

The Treasurer is responsible for all financial transactions. He receives all lodge money from the Secretary, and pays all debts as directed. It is his responsibility to present monthly financial reports for the regular communications (business meetings). These reports may be printed and distributed prior to the meeting, and do not need to be read aloud during the meeting, though they do still need to be approved by a majority lodge vote.

The Treasurer is also tasked to assist the Worshipful Master and Senior Warden with developing and presenting an annual budget for approval by the lodge brethren.

The Treasurer does not need to be in possession of an accounting degree, however experience with bookkeeping and accounting is an asset. Financial bookkeeping transactions may be performed either by hand or by the use of accounting software.

In some Jurisdictions, including Nebraska, the offices of the Secretary and Treasurer may be held by the same Brother. This is the only instance that a Brother may hold more than one office in the same Lodge.

Chaplain

The Chaplain's Jewel of office is an Opened Book, symbolizing the Volume of Sacred Law (the Christian Bible, Hebrew Torah or Tanah, the Muslim Qur'an, the Hindu Vedas or other Holy Books).

The Chaplain's seat is on the left of the Worshipful Master, beside him in the East.

The Chaplain is the spiritual leader of the lodge. The Chaplain need not be an ordained clergy of any type. But, within the lodge, the Chaplain is responsible for non-denominational prayers at both the opening and closing of meetings, during degree ritual and ceremonies, before meals, and at any time he is requested to do so.

Tyler

The Tyler's Jewel of office is the Sword, by which he symbolically refuses entrance to anyone who is uninitiated in the Craft. The sword has no scabbard, as it is his symbolic duty to always have his sword drawn, ready for the defense of his post.

He sits outside the closed door of the lodge room, armed with his sword, and is frequently a long-time Mason. The most effective Tyler will be familiar with and can identify many of the lodge's members.

The Tyler's principle duty is to ensure that only those who are duly qualified are allowed to enter the lodge room. One method of doing this is to have the visitor seeking admission present his lodge dues card, answer some questions, and possibly recite the "Tyler's Oath". This oath is found on the last page of the Grand Lodge cipher.

The Tyler guards against cowans and eavesdroppers. During the Middle Ages, a cowan was a man who built stone walls of poor quality. He was an uninitiated or non-apprenticed stonemason...a "jackleg", if you will.

While the Tyler is sometimes called upon to assist in the preparation of candidates, his chief duty is to (symbolically) keep unskilled workmen from overhearing the conversation within the lodge room.

After the lodge members are inside the lodge room, the door is closed, and it is the Tyler's duty to decide whether late arrivals may enter or not. It is also his duty to make sure that each visitor is "properly clothed", which means they must be wearing their Masonic apron in the correct manner.

To be fully and properly clothed before entrance into the lodge room the visitor must be wearing their apron over the top (or on the outside) of their suit coat (never under their coat) and the apron strings must be fully tied before the Tyler will allow the visitor entrance. Some jurisdictions call this position the Outer Guard

Marshal

The Marshal of a Masonic Lodge is an appointed officer of the lodge. The Marshal is in some jurisdictions known as the "Director of Ceremonies".

The Marshal's duties and principle role is the organization of Masonic processions, and ensuring the correct precedence and etiquette is followed in formal proceedings. Basically, he ensures people are lined up in the proper order. It is his duty to formally conduct visitors into the lodge and introduce them to the members when the lodge is in session. There is a place in the second section of the Master Mason Degree ritual where the Marshal is required to organize and lead a procession.

GRAND LODGE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Worshipful Master and Grand Lodge

One of the specific duties of the Worshipful Master is to see that his Lodge is properly represented in all meetings of the Grand Lodge. If he cannot personally attend, then it is his duty appoint a proxy to represent him from among the members of his Lodge. It is incumbent on all officers of the lodge to attend Grand Lodge Annual Communication when circumstances allow. The Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge is an extremely important event and it affects the entire Fraternity in Nebraska. It is an opportunity for lodge Brethren to engage with other Brethren from around the state and there will be an opportunity to obtain good education and information for those who wish to learn more about the Fraternity.

The Grand Lodge Communication is held on the first Friday and Saturday in February, at such time and place as the Grand Master may select, with the approval of the Grand Lodge.

Credentials for the Worshipful Master, the Senior and Junior Wardens, and Secretary are mailed to the delegates by the Grand Lodge Office, along with other communications regarding the Grand Lodge Session. If an officer finds it necessary to appoint a proxy, it is their prerogative to appoint any member of their lodge who is in good standing. The Master is tasked to ensure a report of the Grand Lodge proceedings is made to his lodge at its next stated meeting.

Activities Involving the Grand Master

Customarily, the Grand Master visits a lodge by invitation. His presence at one of your Lodge's events might well be the highlight of your year in the East. If you wish to invite the Grand Master to a special occasion, please do so, for he will be happy to accept if his schedule permits. Do remember though, he is an extremely busy Mason, and plan accordingly. There are approximately 120 Lodges in Nebraska and only one Grand Master. As a courtesy to him, ensure your invitation reaches him several weeks, or preferably months, before the date of your event.

There are specific guidelines for receiving the Grand Master into your Lodge. These directions are found within the Ceremonies Manual. It will take some time and practice to ensure your Lodge does an admirable job of properly receiving the Grand Master.

The nature of your special occasion may be such that you also desire to invite the other Grand Lodge Officers, and perhaps their wives. This also applies to the Past Grand Masters. All of

these Brethren are receptive to such invitations, but they too are busy brothers and should be informed as far in advance as possible.

In any combination of circumstances which concern an invitation to the Grand Master or other official representatives of the Grand Lodge, bear in mind that you and your Lodge are the hosts. Your guests should be fully informed about the nature and important details of your event, the time it is scheduled to begin, what is considered appropriate attire, and where it is to be held. Some of your guests may come from distant sections of the State and will require overnight accommodations. Offer to assist them in obtaining the necessary accommodations, and if requested, provide names and phone numbers of nearby lodging.

When a number of distinguished guests are present, and introductions are in order, handle the situation as systematically and as briefly as possible. Often you can introduce your guests by groups, requesting the audience to hold its applause until the entire group has been introduced. If the Grand Master is present, he may make many of the introductions himself. If you choose to ask for remarks from other dignitaries request one of the dignitaries speak for the entire group.

Dispensations from the Grand Master

Dispensation is permission granted to deviate in some manner from the Constitution, Bylaws, regulations, and usages of the Grand Lodge as set forth in Nebraska Masonic Code, also known as the Constitution and Bylaws.

Only the Grand Master or the Grand Lodge, when in session, can issue a dispensation. All requests for dispensations should be addressed to the Grand Lodge Office. In due course, they will reach the Grand Master, and, at his discretion, he will grant or deny the request.

The Grand Master will not grant a dispensation to do anything that is contrary to current Masonic law. It is futile to request him to do so. Therefore, before asking for a dispensation of any kind, a lodge or Master should first carefully review the Masonic Law and be governed accordingly.

One example of a dispensation that is often requested, but which cannot be granted by the Grand Master, is for a one-time change to allow the lodge to move its regular communication date or time to a date or time other than that which is specified in its lodge bylaws. The Grand Master cannot grant dispensation that would alter the policies set out in the lodge bylaws except with his approval of a "proposed bylaw amendment" that has been submitted by the lodge. That procedure changes the policies set out in lodge bylaws from that point forward, until changed by a subsequent "proposed bylaw amendment."

Nebraska Masonic Law requires that a dispensation from the Grand Master is necessary before a lodge or Master can proceed in any of the following situations:

1. To hold a lodge meeting elsewhere than its Temple.
2. To hold a special election of officers, if the lodge has failed to elect on the date specified by the Masonic Law.
3. To fill a vacancy in the office of Worshipful Master, or any elected officer, by special election, except the Secretary and Treasurer.

4. To organize a new lodge.
5. To hold an installation of officers at any location other than the Masonic Temple, or to hold an installation of officers in any month other than January.

The above is only a partial list. Various other situations may arise which will require a dispensation. Before you send a request to the Grand Lodge office, always consult the Masonic Law and be governed accordingly.

The Grand Lodge Office

The Grand Lodge Office is the center for communications within the Grand Lodge and the subordinate Lodges. The Grand Lodge Office stands ready to assist and answer any questions not readily answered within the various manuals. The Worshipful Master is responsible for certain reports and payments which must be made by his Lodge to the Grand Lodge Office in a timely manner. These include:

1. The Election Report which is due by November 30th
2. The Annual Report which is due by February 10th
3. The Membership Sustaining Committee Report which is due by February 10th
4. The Education Committee Report which is due by February 10th
5. Payment of Grand Lodge per capita and assessments by April 10th
6. Payment of the reimbursement invoice from Grand Lodge for lodge liability and surety bond coverage, required by the Grand Lodge Bylaws.
7. The Suspension Report which is due by May 10th
8. Monthly Activity Reports, either online or on the appropriate paper form, submitted to the Grand Lodge office due by the 10th of each month

It is the Secretary's duty to discharge all these duties before the deadlines. But, the ultimate responsibility rests with the Worshipful Master. Should any of the required reports fail to arrive, should payment of per capita tax and assessments not be made by the mandated deadline, it will be the Worshipful Master who will be called for an accounting.

Services and Materials Available from the Grand Lodge Office

The Grand Lodge Office does more than require reports and demand payments. The Grand Lodge Office is always ready to assist individual lodges in a myriad of ways if requested. It also offers and makes available to lodges certain services and materials. Some of them are free, while others have a nominal fee to cover the cost of production. Among these are the following:

1. List of Regular Lodges recognized by the Grand Lodge of Nebraska
2. Copies of various handbooks and educational material
3. The Constitution and Bylaws of the Grand Lodge
4. Ciphers, Monitors, and Ceremonies Manuals
5. 25, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, and 75-Year Pins and Certificates
6. Printed forms for Lodge Reports
7. Standard Proficiency Manuals
8. Dues cards

Balloting and Voting at Grand Lodge Annual Communication

There are three items of primary interest in relation to balloting and voting during the Grand Lodge Session:

1. Ballot for the election of Grand Officers
2. The manner of voting on resolutions or motions
3. The responsibility of each delegate to vote on such resolutions or motions

Every Brother eligible should ballot/vote according to the dictates of his own conscience and best judgment, so that the welfare of the whole Fraternity is best served.

Ballots for the annual election of the Grand Officers will be received when you file your credentials during registration at the Annual Communication. Do not lose them, replacement ballots will NOT be available. The Grand Master will call for the ballots at the proper time. In voting, remember that the elective officers are: Deputy Grand Master (goes to Grand Master automatically), Grand Senior Warden, Grand Junior Warden, and Grand Secretary. All other Grand Lodge officers are appointed by the incoming Grand Master.

When the Grand Master places any question or motion before the Grand Lodge, he usually calls for the usual voting sign of a Mason when voting. The method of voting is determined each year by each Grand Master. Some Grand Masters will elect to vote by a show of hands, some will use a written ballot. If the vote is so close that a decision is difficult, he may call for a standing vote, in which case an actual count will be made. Except in rare instances, one of the first two methods usually suffices to settle the issue. A roll call shall be ordered at the request of three members.

Should you desire to present a resolution to amend the Grand Lodge Constitution or Bylaws, you should prepare it in writing, have it signed by four other members of Grand Lodge, and present it to the Grand Secretary before the close of Grand Lodge. "Member of Grand Lodge" means a delegate also holding credentials to vote at Annual Communication. If you have any questions regarding the proper procedure to present a resolution to amend the Constitution or Bylaws, a member of the Jurisprudence Committee, a Grand Lodge officer or the Grand Lodge office may be consulted for assistance.

When a question is put, it shall be the duty of every member of Grand Lodge to ballot/vote, unless excused by the Grand Lodge. Previous reference has been made to each delegate's responsibility to consider only the best interests of the Fraternity, as a whole, when casting his vote on any question. Personal or local preferences should be laid aside in favor of what is best for Freemasonry.

It is significant that no lodge can instruct its Master, Wardens or Secretary as to how they must ballot/vote on any question or issue that is to come before the Grand Lodge. The Master, Wardens, and Secretary are the only officers of the lodge who are balloting/voting members of the Grand Lodge. When they attend an official Grand Lodge Session they are accountable to no one for their choice of vote/ballot.

The wise Master is always receptive to advice and good counsel, and he frequently seeks competent guidance from his membership. He should know the predominant sentiment of his Lodge concerning every issue, and should give that sentiment due consideration before arriving at any important decision. But the final decision is his, and his alone, to make.

Grand Lodge Committee Service

Any Nebraska Brother, as a member of the Grand Lodge, may be called upon to serve on a committee of that body. If so appointed, he will be notified by the Grand Master or the Grand Lodge Office as to when and where the committee will meet. There are three different types of Grand Lodge Committees. They are Standing Committees, Special Committees and Trial Commissions.

The Grand Lodge Standing Committees are:

1. Jurisprudence
2. Judge Advocate
3. Fraternal Relations
4. Masonic Relief
5. Masonic Education
6. Awards
7. Nebraska Work
8. Grievances
9. Finance
10. Credentials
11. Grand Lodge Office
12. Public Relations
13. Membership
14. Lodge Leadership.

The Special Committees are, as their name implies, appointed specifically for a special occasion or need. The Special Committees may be appointed at the will and pleasure of the Grand Master or at the direction of the Grand Lodge.

Trial Commissions are formed by direction of The Grand Master when necessary to conduct Masonic Trials.

More information concerning the committees may be found in Chapter III of the Grand Lodge Bylaws.

LODGE STEWARDSHIP

Why Planning Results in a More Successful Year

The most critical step in preparing for next year is planning activities and ensuring you have an active schedule geared to the interests and needs of your brothers and potential members.

Keeping these points in mind, build a year that will stand as a landmark for future Masters, and the beginning or continuation of excellence in your lodge.

Effective plans involve the membership and the two brothers who will follow you as Worshipful Master. If you make a three-year plan, it will set the targeted agenda for the foreseeable future. To move your Lodge in a positive direction, start by identifying the areas of lodge performance that are strong or those that need improvement, and decide what must be done for continued

improvement the next three years. Not only will this assist you in preparing a successful year, it also puts the next two Masters ahead in planning the year they may serve as Master.

Remember to incorporate Grand Lodge activities into your calendar and join lodges across the state in moving the fraternity in the same, positive direction. A healthy lodge will incorporate activities from each of the following areas in their annual plans. By doing so, you will provide a diverse program of activities that will appeal to more brothers.

The nine areas lodges should address to be successful and relevant are:

Lodge Meetings	Membership
Ritual Work	Communication
Grand Lodge Activities	Community & Fraternity Service
Fellowship	Finances
Education	

Keep in mind that a one-man lodge cannot achieve as much as an involved entire membership working together. Involving brothers in your planning enables them to take ownership and helps commit them to its successful completion. Enlist their assistance to serve on committees that will implement the plan. Set a date to meet with all committee members. Give them their charge for the coming year and familiarize them with the plan. Attend committees' first meetings to make sure they're headed in the right direction. The planning process you use should be repeated by those following you as Master. Their plans need to be reviewed and compared with the plans of the next two Masters, and revised so your lodge's plan remains on the same course. At your installation hand out a list of all planned activities. You cannot get it in front of your members too often. When members see an active and fun year on tap, they will encourage their relatives, friends and acquaintances to join your Lodge. You cannot expect your "customers" to "buy" or "sell" your "product" if they don't know what it is and agree with it. Also, keep copies of the activities in the back of the lodge, post it on bulletin boards, include it in every newsletter to members, review upcoming activities at all meetings, put it on your lodge's Website, and include it in all e-mails to all members.

Preparing a Budget

As in life, your lodge must have a budget. Grand Lodge Bylaws require all Nebraska lodges to have a budget every year. For most people, preparing a budget is drudgery that is best avoided when possible! That being said, it is a very necessary part of running a Masonic Lodge. By having a budget in place, you and your lodge will be better enabled to handle your annual expenses, determine if you have financial shortfalls, and provide more accurate and timely information to the Brethren, and shorten meetings by not having to approve payment of recurring bills that are included in an approved budget.

Your budget should include:

1. All fixed, recurring expenses such as rent, utilities, per capita and assessments for Grand Lodge, wages, and insurance
2. All expenses associated with your plans and events for your year as Master
3. Charitable contributions
4. Money set aside for unexpected expenses
5. All expected income from dues, fund raisers, and Membership in Perpetuity interest
6. Interest and dividend income from bank accounts and investments
7. Sale of holdings such as stock, bonds, investments, Income from rental property
8. Petitions for membership or affiliation
9. Donations to the lodge

A good place to start is to examine your lodge's current or past budget. This will provide you with valuable information concerning costs you might not even be aware existed. Resist the urge to simply copy last year's budget and submit it as your own. That will not serve you well when the financial realities of your year need to be addressed. Ensure you adequately fund the activities you wish to present. If your lodge does not have a budget, a good starting budget can be developed by reviewing the past few year's expenses and income.

It is also a good idea to speak with the Lodge Treasurer to ask about any financial challenges with which the lodge is already dealing, or might perhaps encounter during your year as Master.

You can find a guide to help you develop your budget in the Grand Lodge's Lodge Leadership Manual.

Conducting Regular Communications

The Worshipful Master is not bound to follow any set agenda or syllabus for the regular communication of the lodge (business meeting). Barring any directives within each lodge's bylaws, it is entirely within his power to choose how he wishes to proceed within his lodge. He must, of course, ensure all business topics are presented, discussed, and acted upon. What follows is a suggested order of events.

1. Opening the lodge in due form
2. Conducting any required proficiency examinations
3. Welcome and introduction of visiting guests and newly raised brothers
4. Minutes of the last regular communication
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Bills and Accounts
7. Memorial Rolls

8. Correspondence (Including information contained in the Lodge Monthly Email From the Grand Master)
9. Old Business - includes Committee Reports
10. New Business
11. Education
12. For the good of Masonry
13. Remarks from visiting dignitaries
14. Lodge closed in due form

Lodge meetings help set the tone for a brother's experience in Masonry. How they feel after a meeting, and how smoothly and efficiently meetings are conducted could spell the difference between your lodge's success in keeping and involving members or experiencing declining membership. It is highly unlikely that anyone became a Mason to sit through business meetings!

Every lodge Brother should extend the hand of friendship to every other Brother, but at a minimum it is the lodge officers who must assume this responsibility at every meeting and ensure all are made to feel welcome.

Surveys of Masons have found over and over that boring meetings that wasted time, led to their loss of interest in lodge. It's no wonder that in many lodges only about 10 percent of a lodge's membership is actively involved. Following are suggestions for saving time and providing a more valuable experience for all present.

1. Email in advance, or hand out copies of the minutes, pass around the correspondence, or consider posting them along with the treasurer's report
2. Begin meetings on time
3. Make sure each presenter is prepared to efficiently make his report
4. Hold introductions to a minimum
5. Introduce guests in groups, if possible
6. Limit remarks at the end of the meeting
7. Do not review in lodge those items which can be read later such as upcoming events
8. Limit debate to a certain amount of time per speaker, or the number of different speakers allowed both pro and con. Once that limit is reached, end debate, and move on to the vote. Do not get mired down in endless debate.

The Master's role is to ensure meetings are organized and effectively controlled by:

1. Arrive in time to organize the meeting. Members will not see the need to be on time if the Master is late. This behavior is very rude to all the Brethren that were responsible and arrived on time.
2. Discuss the agenda in advance with the Wardens. Your meeting will be much smoother if you and your Wardens negotiate any disagreements in advance.

3. Know the ritual to open and close a lodge efficiently
4. Create an agenda for every meeting
5. Check your lodge's bylaws for the order of business, discuss the agenda with the Secretary and talk to committee chairmen about their reports
6. Prepare a 12-month calendar of activities and put it in front of your members at every meeting, degree, on social media, and in newsletters and e-mails. If it is completed early enough, present it at your Installation.
7. Avoid the following pitfalls:
 - a. Secretaries are not in charge of the meeting or the lodge. Instead, they are the right hand of the Master and should help him with meetings when requested to do so.
 - b. Ritual purists sidetrack meetings by enforcing letter-perfect ritual. Memorization may not be everyone's strong point. Advise purists not to correct officers during meetings, and hold practices to help officers, and purists, learn their parts correctly. Officers are tasked to be proficient in the ritual work, not perfect
8. Meetings should be more than reading the minutes and paying bills. Masonic education, Masonic presentations, functions with the ladies and youth are a few possible programs. Make lodge meetings an event that is fun and interesting for all. Men attend when there is an interesting program. Some ways to improve meetings are:
 - a. Hold special activities at least six times a year during stated meetings
 - b. Involve members in the program and planning
 - c. Ask individuals in your community to present a program whether they are Masons or not
9. Control the meeting

Proper Protocol When In Lodge

The Master of a lodge and all Past Masters are always addressed as Worshipful Brother. It is a sign of respect. It is acceptable to address them by Worshipful Brother followed by either their first or last name.

A Brother should always rise and wait to be recognized to address the Worshipful Master in an open Lodge.

None may pass between the Worshipful Master and the Altar when the lodge is open (the candles are lit and the Bible is open) unless directed by the Worshipful Master, or as a part of the ritual.

When the Senior Deacon presents the ballot box, all who are able must rise to cast their ballot.

Every eligible Brother present must ballot on all petitions. It is impossible to be excused from balloting. This is necessary because all candidates for membership must receive a unanimous favorable ballot, to be elected to receive the Three Degrees of Freemasonry.

No one may enter or leave the lodge room during balloting. The Tyler should be invited in prior to starting the balloting.

It is a Masonic offense to discuss a petition following balloting, or to express an opinion that a particular brother cast, or might have cast, a black cube.

Neither the Worshipful Master nor the Senior or Junior Wardens may leave their stations except as a part of the ritual. It is not permissible for either or both of the Wardens to leave their respective stations and line up to bring a Brother to light in any of the three degrees.

It is a Masonic offense to discuss religion or politics in lodge.

Three raps of the gavel signifies all present within the lodge room, Brethren and guests, must stand. Two raps raises only the elected officers. One rap congregates the lodge, raises an individual Brother, seats the lodge, or alternately signifies opening or closing an order of business.

After a lodge is properly opened the Worshipful Master may, if he desires, turn the responsibility for controlling the entry door over to the Senior Warden. Any Brother then wishing to enter or leave the Lodge would salute the Senior Warden from directly in front of the West pedestal.

Aprons should always be worn on the outside of any clothing as a badge of Masonry, and also so that everyone may see, at a glance, the manner in which it is being worn.

A brother must be vouched for by one with whom he has sat in any lodge, or else he must be examined before he can be admitted as a visitor to a lodge.

Cell phones should be turned off or, at a minimum, be turned to vibrate. No noises should emanate from a phone within any open Lodge.

Relationship of the Lodge to the Church

A lodge is not a substitute for the church. The individual Mason should be encouraged to fortify his religion, and his Masonry, by active worship in the church of his own choice. No Brother should ever be asked to identify his religious faith within the lodge. Men of all faiths are accepted within Masonry as long as they hold a sincere belief in a higher being.

Masonic Funerals and Memorial Services

Masonic funerals, and memorial services, are the last measure of respect and devotion that a lodge can pay to its departed members. One of the most solemn and serious duties as Master is to see that these ceremonies are conducted properly and impressively.

As soon as news is received of the death of a Brother, the Worshipful Master, or designee, should contact the bereaved family. Extend to them personal condolence and the sympathy of the

lodge and offer to help in any way the lodge can. Determine if it is their wish, or the wish of the departed Brother, that the Lodge conduct a Masonic funeral, or memorial service.

A Masonic funeral, or memorial service, is the right of every Master Mason in good standing. The Code permits a Brother to receive Masonic interment under the following conditions:

1. He must be a Master Mason
2. He must be in good standing
3. He need not be affiliated with the lodge within whose jurisdiction he dies, for it is one of the most graceful acts of Masonic courtesy to gather as a lodge and bestow these honors upon worthy sojourners at the request or approval of his lodge and surviving family

As Master of the Lodge, you cannot deny a Masonic funeral, or memorial service, if the departed Brother is entitled to it, and you should not, under any circumstances, discourage the family from requesting a Masonic funeral, or memorial service. If affiliation or standing cannot be determined, for whatever reason, always err on the side of charity and Brotherly love

As an expression of the lodge's respect and love for the departed Brother, it is desirable to obtain the largest possible attendance of members at the funeral. It is not always easy to obtain good attendance, but every effort should be exerted to do your best.

Some advance suggestions to improve attendance include:

1. Maintain a list of lodge members who are retired or whose work will permit them to attend funerals or memorial services
2. Appoint a Funeral Notification Committee Chairman whose duty it will be to ensure contact is made with every Brother on the funeral or memorial service list
3. Use your lodge's e-mailing list or Facebook Page to notify the Brethren
4. If time permits perhaps send a postcard notice to every local or nearby member

Ensure the Masonic funeral, or memorial service conducted by your lodge is as skillful and impressive as possible. Remember, Masonic funerals, and memorial services, are among the few occasions when the public has an opportunity to see the Craft at work. The impression your Lodge makes at Masonic funerals, or memorial services, can go a long way toward winning public esteem and prestige, and ensuring we show proper respect to our departed Brother.

The person delivering the oration should be very familiar with the wording of the ritual. The ceremonies as printed in the Ceremonies Manual, are the only recognized and acceptable form permitted by Nebraska Grand Lodge Law.

Make sure the Funeral Committee Chairman, and members, understand what is expected. Check every detail of the equipment needed; clean aprons, officers' jewels, Bible, sprig of acacia, white leather apron, and don't forget the deceased Brother's Masonic Record.

Remember to pay your respects to the family as you exit the Masonic portion of the service.

SUGGESTED READING

Following is a brief list of suggested books to get you started seeking more light in Masonry and leadership. Once you become better acquainted with various authors, you will discover more of their books to read, and that will, in turn, lead you to other authors. Ask your Brethren which books they prefer to read. The Internet is a great source of reading material, and some of these suggested books may be available to read on-line at no charge. Be skeptical of information you receive on individual websites or on social media such as Facebook unless it is an official Masonic Lodge page. Often these are written by people on either side of the issue with their own agenda, and not always factual. Please note these suggested books are for gaining general Masonic knowledge and leadership, and may not be representative of the bylaws or accepted standards of Freemasonry within Nebraska. Bear in mind that the Constitution and Bylaws of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska and your Lodge bylaws will always take precedence.

Macoy's Modern Worshipful Master Assistant, edited by Michael Halleran
ISBN 9780880531122

Macoy's Modern Worshipful Master Assistant retains the organizational and editorial style of Macoy's classic while presenting the twenty-first century lodge officer with practical and useful advice on lodge administration, the powers, prerogatives and responsibilities of the Master, subordinate officer's duties, lodge bylaws and committees, and Masonic law, all explained through comparative examples from grand jurisdictions across North America.

How Good People Make Tough Choices by Rushworth M. Kidder, ISBN 0-68481-838-8

Breaking down complex philosophical issues into a step-by-step self-help guide, the founder of the Institute for Global Ethics shows us how to grapple with everyday issues and problems: Should I take my family on a much-needed vacation or save money for my children's education? Should we protect the endangered owl or maintain jobs for loggers? This is a unique, anecdote-rich, and articulate program that teaches us to think for ourselves rather than supplying us with easy, definitive answers. Offering concrete guidelines and principles, Kidder enables us to resolve ethical dilemmas and to make the tough choice between what are usually two "right" values.

Bowling Alone – The Collapse and Revival of American Community by Robert D. Putnam,
ISBN 0-743203-046

Drawing on vast new data that reveal Americans' changing behavior, Putnam shows how we have become increasingly disconnected from one another and how social structures—whether they be PTA, church, or political parties—have disintegrated. Until the publication of this groundbreaking work, no one had so deftly diagnosed the harm that these broken bonds have wreaked on our physical and civic health, nor had anyone exalted their fundamental power in creating a society that is happy, healthy, and safe.

Freemasons For Dummies by Christopher Hodapp, ISBN 0-7645-9796-5

Fascinated by Freemasons? *Freemasons For Dummies* is the internationally best-selling introduction to the Masons, the oldest and largest "secret society" in the world. This

balanced, eye-opening guide demystifies Freemasonry, explaining everything from its elaborate rituals and cryptic rites, to its curious symbols and their meanings. Find out what goes on in a Masonic meeting. You'll understand the true purposes of Masonic "secrecy" and philosophy, meet famous Masons throughout history, and discover related organizations like the Knights Templar, the Scottish Rite, Order of the Eastern Star, and the Shriners. Explore the controversies and conspiracy theories that swirl around this organization at the center of Dan Brown's novel *The Lost Symbol*, and discover the changes coming to the Craft.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Freemasonry by PH.D. S Brent Morris, ISBN 1-5925-7490-4

What is the truth about the Masons suggested in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*? Can Freemasonry really be dated back as far as Babylon? Did they really coordinate the Boston Tea Party and the American Revolution? What really goes on at a Masonic lodge during an initiation? Here is the real story behind the secret society that now boasts nearly five million members (and has included such illustrious fellows as George Washington and Benjamin Franklin), as revealed by a Master Mason.

Leading Change by John P. Kotter, ISBN 0-87584-747-1

What will it take to bring your organization successfully into the twenty-first century? The world's foremost expert on business leadership distills twenty-five years of experience and wisdom based on lessons he has learned from scores of organizations and businesses to write this visionary guide. The result is a very personal book that is at once inspiring, clear-headed, and filled with important implications for the future. The pressures on organizations to change will only increase over the next decades. Yet the methods managers have used in the attempt to transform their companies into stronger competitors -- total quality management, reengineering, right sizing, restructuring, cultural change, and turnarounds -- routinely fall short, says Kotter, because they fail to alter behavior. Emphasizing again and again the critical need for leadership to make change happen, *Leading Change* provides the vicarious experience and positive role models for leaders to emulate. The book identifies an eight-step process that every company must go through to achieve its goal, and shows where and how people, good people, often derail. Reading this highly personal book is like spending a day with John Kotter. It reveals what he has seen, heard, experienced, and concluded in many years of working with companies to create lasting transformation. The book is an inspirational yet practical resource for everyone who has a stake in orchestrating changes in their organization. In *Leading Change* we have unprecedented access to our generation's master of leadership.

Understanding Manhood in America by Robert G. Davis, ISBN 978-0935633375

Two of the most important subjects that Davis discusses are those of marriage and fatherhood. The challenges and rewards of being a husband and a father are great. As Davis notes, too many of us had poor role models of what it means to be either a husband or a father. Rather than working on the issues that exist in these complex relationships, all too often men choose to simply walk away. Davis suggests this happens because these men are acting as they observed their fathers having acted. However, Davis is also quick to say that the modern man must rise above that if he is to grasp what it means to be a

man. The road to the "mature masculine" is not the "easy road"; it is one of work, responsibility and perseverance.

Freemasonry at the Top by John Beaumont, ISBN 9780880530897

How one Master revitalized his lodge. Surefire paths to spectacular lodge attendance, attracting new members, getting old and young members involved, and assigning committees that really functioned. This is a workbook for a Worshipful Master to help his lodge grow and thrive. Use the step by step programs to bring your Masonic lodge alive and thrive.

For the Good of the Order: Examining the Shifting Paradigm Within Freemasonry by John Bizzack Ph.D., ISBN 9781490480404

What has transpired in North American Freemasonry since the 1960s has been influenced by not only factors external to the institution, but less obvious internal ones as well. To better understand where the Craft has been and where it will likely be in the future requires a balanced examination in context, a context wherein Freemasonry is viewed as a whole, not in fragments. *For the Good of the Order* examines the long-standing attitude regarding membership decline and lack of engagement by men who enter the West Gate with initial enthusiasm, but soon find their zeal for active involvement in the Fraternity waning. This panoramic view and examination illustrates that much of what the institution faces today, and in the future regarding membership decline, is much more likely to be effectively addressed by what is often seen emerging in Masonry today around the country: a return to past traditions and practicing traditional Freemasonry in our lodges.

A Comprehensive View of Freemasonry by Henry Wilson Coil., ISBN 9780880530538

This book covers a huge range of information concerning Masonry and how it evolved into what we know today.

Principle Centered Leadership by Stephen Covey by Stephen R. Covey, ISBN 9780671792800

How do we as individuals and organizations survive and thrive amid tremendous change? Why are efforts to improve falling so short in real results despite the millions of dollars in time, capital, and human effort being spent on them? How do we unleash the creativity, talent, and energy within ourselves and others in the midst of pressure? Is it realistic to believe that balance among personal, family, and professional life is possible?

Stephen R. Covey demonstrates that the answer to these and other dilemmas is *Principle-Centered Leadership*, a long-term, inside-out approach to developing people and organizations. The key to dealing with the challenges that face us today is the recognition of a principle-centered core within both ourselves and our organizations. Dr. Covey offers insights and guidelines that can help you apply these principles both at work and at home -- leading not just to a new understanding of how to increase quality and productivity, but also to a new appreciation of the importance of building personal and professional relationships in order to enjoy a more balanced, more rewarding, more effective life."