

TAKING INVENTORY – APRIL 15, 2019 by Henry Adams

Companions and Sir Knights,

In Rite Notes, two months ago, you had the opportunity to see what motivates people to join a fraternity. Last month you learned what drives people. Any of those sound familiar?

Undoubtedly you have seen yourself or someone you know in those articles. It is those things that draw people into fellowship. In order to seek membership, they must feel that they will get something out of it. That isn't selfish by any means.

Pleasure and satisfaction is our "pay" for being a member. That is why we pay dues, go to meetings, devote long hours and endure even the unpleasant times. Ultimately, we are "rewarded" for our good works. That too, is not a negative. It is our motivator.

The positive experiences must outweigh the bad (and there will be negative experiences). In our lodges and York Rite Bodies, we must work to limit negative experiences while offering opportunities for members to feel useful.

How does your York Rite Body fair next to these ideals? Get out a legal pad and divide it into three columns.

Points	Notes	Items
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First write down the items from your York Rite Body in the middle column. These items include:

- Security
- Feeling of Worth
- Feeling of Accomplishment
- Acceptance
- Giving something back to the communities
- Prestige
- Education

In the right hand column write down what kinds of things your York Rite Body does in these categories. Be specific. Now look over the notes for each category and award your Body points for each category. If you do a good job at it, give yourself a "10". If it's mediocre, maybe a "5". If you don't offer it, then it's a "0".

The maximum number of points is 70. If your York Rite Body is doing really well in all areas, then maybe you're a 70. You have a dynamic Body. If your score is less than 20, you have a major problem. The areas with the lowest scores are areas that need improvement.

Now ask some of your fellow members to take the test and compare answers. This will help you to begin to plot a course for improvement. How can you improve in these target areas mentioned above. Most are surprisingly simple to do, and many are not that costly.

Here are some suggestions:

Security -- Improve the lighting inside and outside the building.

Be sure to investigate new members thoroughly before admitting them. Your investigating committee is supposed to be a safeguard against unsavory types. Just because they breathe doesn't mean that they will be a good member. Don't underestimate the power of personal security.

Feeling of Worth--A little praise can go a long way to making a person an active member. We all seek praise; it is part of the human psyche. We accomplish more when we feel like we're worth something.

Have annual awards dinners, give out framed certificates. Say thank you often. Let people know their efforts mean something to you and the Body.

Feeling of Accomplishment--Celebrate the completion of a degree, project, etc. Shower praise, give congratulations. Do projects that mean something.

Even if the project didn't turn out like you had hoped, or the degree didn't go as smoothly as you would have liked, find something to praise. Everyone wants to feel that what they are working toward is a worthy goal. Celebrate the victories instead of focusing on the defeats.

Acceptance--How accepting is your York Rite Body of new members? If new members feel like outsiders, they will not return.

How often do you make people feel accepted? Welcome them. Shake their hand. Look them in the eye. Call them by name. Find a way to draw a person into the conversation. Be sure someone is assigned to keep an eye for the "wall-flowers" who just sit there by themselves and say nothing. These people are undoubtedly introverts who are probably shy in crowds.

Giving back to the Community--How well does your York Rite Body relate to the community? Do people know about you? Would it make any difference to your town if your group ceased to exist.

Community projects vary from community to community. Each one should meet the individual needs of your town. You can't solve all of your communities' problems, but you can make a dent in them. If each citizen does their share, your city will become a good place to live.

How can you find out what project would be good for your community. Most likely from your new members! They have the freshest perspective.

Prestige-- Does it mean anything to belong to your Body besides paying dues? Is there a bit of pride in wearing your pin or ring? Belonging should have a sense of honor to it.

Education-- Our members want to improve themselves in Masonry. They want to know more about what it means to be a member of the order.

Get others to sit down over a cup of coffee with a legal pad and brainstorm. Discuss your ideas and you will be on your way to finding solutions to your membership problem.