

# I thought I hated my brother. . .

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It starts small. A clenched jaw. A rolled eye. An inner monologue that says, “Why are they like this?”

That’s your signal. Not that something is wrong with *them*, but that something has been activated *in you*.

You don’t have to like someone to learn from them; but you do have to notice when *something in you shifts*. And you do have to make a choice: ignore it, or engage it.

Most of us don’t. We mislabel that discomfort as judgment: *They’re obnoxious. They’re self-absorbed. They’re too much.* But those instincts are rarely about *them*; they’re about *us*. They’re about *the places in us still unfinished, still uncertain, still tender.*

Dislike isn’t the enemy. It’s a signal. It’s a knocking at the inner door, asking: *Are you willing to look here, too?*

And if you are; if you’re brave enough to face what it brings up, then dislike can become one of your most powerful tools for growth.



## The Course Stone I Quarry

There was a man in lodge I used to avoid. I didn’t like the way he communicated. He always had something to add, always needed to be heard. His voice grated on me, not because it was loud, but because it was probing; the kind of awkward probing that made you wonder what his goal was.

I told myself it was because I valued humility. That I didn’t like blowhards. That it was just a clash of personalities and a tribute to my patience to endure his presence in *my lodge*.

But the truth? His voice was a spotlight.

Not on him; on me.

On *the parts of myself not tough enough to withstand probing*. The untested perspectives I was afraid to express. On the words I swallowed in meetings. On the times I didn’t raise my hand even when I had something to say.

He reminded me of everything I told myself I wasn't allowed to be: fearless, assertive, and direct. And rather than sit with that discomfort, I pushed it outward. I did all this in my head and no one knew but me... and over time, around him, I felt the armor go up and the sword come out and I noticed I was doing it wrong.

I thought I wanted a lodge with fewer people like him. What I really need is more men with different edges so I can find my own. Because it turns out the stone I'm working isn't just rough; it's coarse, unshaped, and full of blind spots. I need the friction. I need the contrast. Not to become them, but to **discover myself more fully. This is the quarry. This is the craft.**

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## □Masonic Tools for Expansion

**The Gavel** - What part of me is trying to fight when I should be listening?

**The Rough Ashlar** - Where am I still jagged; what's this moment revealing about that edge?

**Left Slipper** - What promise did I make to grow; how can I keep it here?

**The Lodge** - What would it take to make this moment feel like Lodge—safe enough to be real?

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## All God's Children, All Jagged Stones

It's easy to talk about brotherly love in the abstract. It's harder to feel it when someone interrupts you, cuts you off in traffic, or makes you question the story you've built about who you are.

But we're all rough ashlar. All unfinished. All walking around with burdens and fractures that no one else can see.

We say "we're all God's children," and that's true. But children have sharp edges. They throw tantrums. They test boundaries. They don't always know what they need, and they rarely know how to ask.

Just like us.

But this isn't an excuse to infantilize others or minimize their impact. Rather, it's a reminder to look inward before we lash outward. We are not called to judge, correct, or admonish every flaw we observe. We are called to *notice* what those flaws stir in us. Every glaring misbehavior, every obvious character deficit—these are chances to learn. To see where our patience ends. To see what part of our story is still unfinished.

This is the experience multiplier in the video game; you can watch other people and learn more about yourself.

What if the person you most dislike is carrying the lesson you most need? What if their sharpness is precisely what reveals the dullness in your own edge; the part of you that hasn't been worked in years?

Masonry isn't a fraternity of finished men. It's a system for refining what is unfinished; especially the parts we don't want to look at.

*"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage."* — Anaïs Nin

## The World Expands

We *need* the friction. We *need* the contrast. Not to become them, but to discover ourselves more fully.

Freemasonry isn't a fraternity of finished men. It's a fraternity of working men; people who choose to try. It's a system for refining what is unfinished; especially the parts we don't want to look at.

So when you feel the flinch, the tightening, the urge to shrink your world: pause. Breathe. Look closer. There is something scared and vulnerable beneath the irritation; some stone ready for shaping.

The world doesn't just expand by accident.

It expands in proportion to your courage.

## Related Podcast Episodes

- [Hidden Tool #1 - Metallic Objects & The Preparing Room](#)
- [Breaking the Silence](#)
- [Naming Fear Activates Your Inner Tiler](#)

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