

From the desk of the Secretary.....

## EMPATHY and CIVILITY

Hello Brethren and Friends of Oakland Durant Rockridge Lodge 188,

Last month I explored the behavior of effective listening and its relationship to civility. This month I want to explore what empathy means to me and how it relates to civility.

To me, empathy is part of effective listening. Empathy is usually described as understanding the emotions and feelings of others.

You might be able to repeat the words of someone (effective listening) but did you really understand the communication? If you think you really understand another viewpoint, can you also understand the emotions someone has regarding that viewpoint (angry, sad, thoughtful)?

Or did you just hear the words?

If you can honestly understand why someone has the emotions they express, then, to me at least, you are on the road to empathy. You can confirm to yourself that you listened to the entire message. Not just to the words but to the entire message someone was telling you.

I realize you cannot start to have empathy without having done effective listening to the person who is expressing their viewpoint. I am starting to see how these behaviors all tie together.

Next month I want to start to explore disagreeing... in a civil manner. Is there even such a thing?