

# A Good Fraternity Man

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What do we mean by "a good Fraternity man?"

The answer to this is "The Influence of Friendship."

The determination of the value of our friends depends upon the extent to which they have influenced us in the direction of higher and better thought and stimulated us to greater activity for the common good. The so-called "good fellow" is so often a man who is only good in the negative sense that he has not energy enough to do active wrong. We call him "good natured" because he gives in to us at every turn, in every discussion, and is what Emerson calls a "mush of concession." This is not the friend we need or want. This is not the man who will ever do great good for us or for himself, and this, in reality, is the type of man which permits of the flourishing existence of evil because he has not the stamina to cry out against it.

To be good Fraternity men you and I must be active in good work, not passive. We must do the good things, think the pure, high thoughts; strive with all our might for cleaner and more healthy minds, and not really sit by and watch in passive submission the passing by of both good actors and bad one upon this stage we call life.

If we would call ourselves good Fraternity men, then we must prove ourselves to be such, not merely by being agreeable, but by influencing as many of our brothers as we can to live upon a higher and ever rising plane of pure thought, clean life, warm affection, and thoughtful, generous action. I say "thoughtful action" because so much of our so-called generosity is misguided, misdirected, and fails to accomplish a good end for the reason that the action of the heart has not had the guidance of the mind.

Your heart and your reason must work together in close co-operation, but your reason must always be the servant and chief adviser of your heart.

We often fail towards each other as brothers because we are afraid of hurting one another's feelings. This is misguided generosity. 'Tis true that if we can correct by

gentle means, it is our duty to do so, and in fact we should cultivate an "ingenuity of gentleness," if I may use the term. But nevertheless we should look most keenly after one another's interests in the direction of progressive life.

The indifferent man replies to us, "It's none of my business what another man does." "Am I my brother's keeper." Most certainly you are! Most assuredly so! You were born into this world to be your brother's keeper, and you came into this Fraternity, and swore upon your honor and your soul that you would be your brother's keeper, and now you are bound to comply with this great obligation and duty, not because you swore it, but because it is right.

And just to the extent that you comply with this duty, just to the extent that you leave impressed upon your brothers of this Fraternity the mark of sincerity, the stamp of purity, the seal of honor and nobility of purpose, so will you be considered and can consider yourself "a good Fraternity man."

I shall look back in future years to the friends I made in the past, or rather the friends who made themselves to me. But I ask, "Who are my friends?"

Is a man a friend to me merely because he has been requested to join the same society that I have been asked to join, and has complied as I did with the request? Is a man a friend to me merely because he is in the same Fraternity as myself? No, gentlemen! he is only an acquaintance; he is not a friend, he is not a brother until he realizes that my soul is in keeping, and determines to discharge the duties of his guardianship to the best of his ability. As he impresses me with the lasting things of life; as he stirs me to live in a higher sphere, and with a nobler purpose, and as he encourages that which he sees to be good in me, and discountenances that which he sees to be bad and lowering, so is he my friend, and so will he stamp upon my heart the memory of him which no time can remove.

He then to me has been "A Good Fraternity Man."