



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

September 26, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

In this article I will discuss what I call "The Three Great Excuses."

It's no secret why Odd Fellowship is diminishing. Every year - year after year - our statewide (and national) numbers go down. They go down for one simple reason: We are not bringing in enough new members to overcome the losses of older members who pass away or withdraw. As I have said time and time again, each of us has the responsibility to bring applicants for membership to our respective Lodges. We can't just sit back and depend on "the other guy or gal" to do it. Recruitment is something we all have to do. We are all links in the historic chain of Odd Fellowship and we - each of us - must all take responsibility to add a new link (e.g. a new member) to that chain.

And in this regard, I want to highlight "The Three Great Excuses" why Odd Fellows don't bring in new applicants.

Excuse Number One: "I don't know anyone who I could ask."

Excuse Number Two: "I don't know what to say."

Excuse Number Three: "I'm too busy."

In addressing "The Three Great Excuses", let me preface my remarks by noting that I have just received a special recognition pin from Sovereign Grand Lodge - it is a gold pin with diamond and it's inscribed "meritorious service". The pin was awarded to me by SGL because I have recruited over 100 new members into this Order over the past eight years. I know something about bringing new members into Odd Fellowship, and I simply don't accept "The Three Great Excuses."

First, you all know people you can ask to consider joining your Lodge. No one is asking you to recruit 100 new members or even 10 new members. Just one new member will do. You can start with members of your own family - spouses, brothers, sisters, adult children, nephews and nieces, cousins, etc. You can then ask your business or work associates, friends, and even acquaintances. I have asked interesting people whom I have met and gotten to know - for



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example, I recently asked my barber if she was interested. (And she was.) Each of you talk to 10, 20 or more people every day. Certainly, one or two of them might really appreciate being asked, and may really enjoy being a member of your Lodge.

Second, if you don't know "what to say" you should ask yourself WHY you are an Odd Fellow. Why did you join in the first place, and why do you remain a member of your Lodge? The reasons that interest and engage you may very well interest and engage your prospective member. And I would suggest that the Lodges that are more active in the community and also plan more good fellowship events for members of the Lodge, provide a larger canvass of reasons for prospective members to join. No one wants to join a Lodge that is moribund, inactive or boring.

Third, we are all busy to a greater or lesser extent. That's a given. But if you are a member of your Lodge - at this point in our fraternal history there is no greater responsibility of membership than to increase our gene pool. Our Order is aging. And our Order is diminishing in membership. We cannot long survive without new members and new blood. And so, whatever else you may be doing in your Lodge - it must come second to your responsibility to bring in JUST ONE new applicant.

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Grand Warden