



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

January 19, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Recently, Grand Master Rick Boyles wrote an article for this newsletter which laid out the ultimate differences between successful Lodges and failing Lodges.

A few days later, I received an e-mail from a member of our Order who, I had always considered, came from a more "conservative" perspective of Odd Fellowship. This member, whom I highly respect, is on in years and had achieved high station and high office in his Lodge and in the statewide Order. Here is what he wrote:

Rick is right on. I agree 100%! A lodge that is without heart and soul has no love of the order, and you usually find the members there wrapping themselves in that cloak of bitterness and blaming everyone else for their problems. The Grand Lodge is trying to steal their assets, all these DMC people are ruining the order with their newfangled ideas, and it isn't the way we did it in 1950. I know, I have heard it, and at one time I was swayed by the negativity, but I woke up. We can still be a practicing fraternal order, and bring our lodges into the 21st Century. True friendship, love, and truth never dies.

I was truly touched by this member's sentiments. The member has been in this Order longer than most, and has seen it all: The bitterness, the complaints, the blaming of others, and the rejection of anything and everything that wasn't the way it was done a half century ago. But, ultimately, this member has seen through the buzz and realizes a simple truth: We must evolve this Order and change the way we do business.

Albert Einstein (a pretty smart fellow) used to define "insanity" as follows: "Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." In many ways, there are members and Lodges in our Order that epitomize "insanity". They believe that if they just keep running things the same way as they have been doing it for the past 50 or 60 years, all will be well. But all is not well. This Order has been steadily losing members for close to 70 years - that's over TWO GENERATIONS of steady loses of members. These losses have resulted in our Order's numbers being over 90% less than they were 70 years ago. There are Lodges now composed of members in their late 60's, 70's and 80's. They have very few, if any, members younger than that. They have, essentially, skipped two generations of potential members. These Lodges do very little except hold formal meetings once or twice a month. They have no committee reports, no new business, and little, if any, unfinished business. They are not visible or active in the community. Frankly, they offer potential new members very little reason to join a moribund Lodge. The



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Lodge has been losing members far in excess of its addition of new members. The remaining members are either oblivious to the obvious or content to continue down the same path they have traveled for the past 20 or 30 years. But this is a selfish path. It may be comfortable for the remaining few members - but it is a path of destruction of the Lodge. When these few members pass away, the Lodge will lack a quorum, the charter will be pulled, and the Lodge will die.

Is this the legacy we wish to leave?

The words "friendship, love and truth" are timeless and can sustain this Order into the future. But the Lodge members who choose not to evolve and change are NOT practicing "friendship, love and truth". But it requires more than repeating slogans to save this Order. We have to reach out into our communities to do good works, we have to develop fun events for our members, and we have to open our Lodges to the community by holding more social meetings. In short, we have to make our Lodges more visible, active and inviting to a new generation of members.

Evolve, or die.

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Dave Rosenberg
Grand Warden