



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

March 5, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Too many of our Lodges are one-dimensional Lodges. In my opinion, that's why Lodges are failing, and the membership numbers in our Order are diminishing.

We need to strive to become three-dimensional Lodges. That effort will, ultimately, increase the satisfaction level of our membership, will halt the decline, and will result in an increase in membership.

I make this bold statement because the facts support it. And the effort to become three-dimensional will transform Odd Fellowship.

Let me define my terms. A one-dimensional Lodge is a Lodge that focuses on one thing—running a traditional closed meeting with ritual and regalia. The one-dimensional Lodge focuses on little else. Now, don't get me wrong. There is nothing wrong with this dimension. I completely support it. The history, the ritual, the secrets, the regalia—these are the things that make us uniquely Odd Fellows! Without it, we might as well be Masons, Elks, or Rotarians. This one dimension is the foundation of Odd Fellowship and must be followed by each and every Lodge.

BUT, it's only one dimension. Lodges that focus almost exclusively on this one dimension are depriving the Lodge members of the full enjoyment of being an Odd Fellow. Further, the one-dimensional Lodge curtails the ability of the Lodge to attract a new generation of members from the ranks of 21st Century men and women. If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that virtually no one is interested in joining a Lodge of Odd Fellows just because that Lodge has a rich history, secret meetings, secret grips, passwords and signs, and the members wear nifty regalia. They want more. And if you require any further proof of this fact, just take a look at our one-dimensional Lodges and the membership declines experienced by those Lodges over the last generation or two.

So, what's a three-dimensional Lodge? This is a Lodge that retains the one-dimension identified above, but ADDS two additional dimensions to its focus. Those other two dimensions are: (1) good fellowship activities for the Lodge members that are fun and bring enjoyment to the members, their families, and potential new members; and (2) community and charitable outreach projects that benefit the local population, and provide satisfaction to the members, their families, and potential new members of the Lodge. Ultimately, a three-dimensional Lodge adds these two



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dimensions which provide a social network for members and which provide for the community support needs of the members. And if you require any further proof that three-dimensional Lodges increase membership, take a look at those three-dimensional Lodges and the membership increases experienced by them.

Now, some of you may say, "That's all well and good, but isn't that something for the large Lodges? My Lodge is too small to become three-dimensional." I don't agree. This formula will work whether your Lodge has 6 members, 60 members, or (as California Lodges were a century ago) 600 members.

Even a 6-member Lodge can engage in good fellowship activities for the members as well as a community project or two—thus transforming itself into a three-dimensional Lodge. The members simply have to decide what they enjoy doing—and then do it! For example, the members might wish to have poker night at the Lodge once a week or once a month, or may wish to go bowling together, or form a book club that meets once each month, or do wine tasting at member's homes—and certainly invite potential members to these events. The members may also decide amongst themselves to undertake a community project—again, based on what the members feel is important for their community—this could include a myriad of ideas, such as making the Lodge Hall available for free to a charitable organization for a fundraiser, or a small downtown clean-up project, or planting a native tree in a park, or working with a local senior center to address needs of the residents, etc. Obviously, again, potential members can be invited to participate. Bottom line, you don't need a huge Lodge to have some fun or to do some community work. And, I guarantee this small Lodge will grow.

Furthermore, what do you have to lose? If your Lodge has lost more members than it has gained over the past 10 years—perhaps it is time to try a different approach...

F-L-T

Dave Rosenberg

Grand Warden