



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

October 7, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

As you know, DMC was founded to address three, and only three, issues: Membership, Membership, and Membership.

The declines in membership in our Order over the past half-century have been appalling. On this continent, we have lost over 90% of our membership numbers. We have many jurisdictions (states and provinces) where the sum total of membership is under 500, some under 200. In California - the largest jurisdiction - our total Odd Fellows membership numbers used to be over 58,000, and are now under 5,000. We once had over 600 Lodges in this state, and now have 120. We have dozens of Lodges with 20 or fewer members on their books, and some with 10 or fewer members. Our Branches are in even worse shape. The sum total of members of Encampments in California today is less than 200. And there are less than 75 Patriarchs Militant in this entire state. And, as always, those are the numbers on paper - query how many of those are active members.

I believe - by now - virtually everyone in California understands the challenge of declining membership and understands that the responsibility to reverse that trend lies with each of us. We can't just depend on "the other guy" to fix the problem. However, it may be that there are some Odd Fellows out there who still don't "get it" and still don't appreciate that the Order (and perhaps their own Lodge) is in trouble. So, with tongue slightly in cheek, for these few unseeing and unknowing members, I offer the following 10-point Primer.

How Do You Know if Your Lodge May Be Failing?

1. You know your Lodge may be failing if you have to get on the phone each month to roust out members to have a quorum of five for a meeting.
2. You know your Lodge may be failing if you haven't initiated a new member into your Lodge for over two years.
3. You know your Lodge may be failing if, at your yearly elections, you have to rotate your elected officers between the same 5 or 6 people.
4. You know your Lodge may be failing if your "members sick and in distress" item is the longest segment of your meeting agenda.



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

5. You know your Lodge may be failing if your Lodge Hall is rarely used except for your Lodge meetings.
6. You know your Lodge may be failing if your youngest Lodge member is over 65.
7. You know your Lodge may be failing if your Lodge meetings last 20 minutes, and there is no new business and no committee reports.
8. You know your Lodge may be failing if your Lodge has no fundraising activity to replenish the Lodge bank account.
9. You know your Lodge may be failing if your Lodge members organize no activity to benefit the local community, and have no social activity for the members.
10. You know your Lodge may be failing if you have some Lodge members who shoot down every new suggested idea with words such as "that won't work", "we tired that once", or "that's a dumb idea".

There you have it. Now you know.

F - L - T

Dave Rosenberg
Deputy Grand Master