



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

June 14, 2012

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

A lot of Odd Fellows and Rebekahs from around California and, frankly, from other jurisdictions write to me. Most of the messages are supportive and positive. They hear our message of change and evolution, the energy and the power that comes from being active members and active Lodges. However, I also receive messages - some from DMC members and some from folks who are not members of DMC - that are sad and discouraged. I heard from a long-time Rebekah who is so discouraged with her Lodge that she is prepared to not renew her membership and to phase out. She says the meetings are boring and unproductive - nothing really gets accomplished. She has energy and ideas, but they are rejected out of hand, and she feels her creativity is stifled. An Odd Fellow has written to me complaining that there is too much "clashing of personalities" going on in his Lodge and at his meetings - "too much back-biting and too many power plays."

Wow.

When did we forget that this fraternal order is all about FRIENDSHIP, LOVE AND TRUTH? When have we grown so detached and so focused on our own selves and our own agendas that we forgot to speak openly person-to-person to our brothers and sisters? When did we decide that we had to pass along a "rumor" about a brother or sister, rather than candidly and directly speak to the affected brother and sister? When was the quest for "power" in the Lodge or in the Order so great that we could criticize or diminish or hurt a Lodge brother or sister?

A little self-reflection is always in order. We are here to "elevate the character of man". Let's make sure to start with our own character.

Lodges should be welcoming and comfortable refuges for our members. Lodges should be places where we support one another.

Let's resolve that:

1. No idea proposed by a member is "stupid" or "silly" or "unworkable". Every idea is worthy of consideration and discussion. Ultimately, the idea may be accepted, modified or rejected. But let's give our proposing brother or sister the courtesy of fair consideration.



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2. No brother or sister should be talked about behind their back. Let's give our brothers and sisters the courtesy of direct face-to-face conversation. If they have done something really good, take the time to tell them so. If they have done something that bothers you, take the time to talk to them about it in a friendly, open and non-threatening way.
3. No one in the Lodge should start a rumor about another member. And if you hear a rumor, it should stop with you.
4. No meeting should be boring or unproductive. Why have a meeting if nothing gets accomplished? Every meeting should have a focus and should move toward a goal - whether it is planning a Lodge dinner, or organizing an event to support a local charity, or planning an installation of officers, etc.
5. In everything we do in our Lodges, we should always ask the question: "Am I doing this for the good of the Order?"

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Dave Rosenberg