



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

July 28, 2012

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

I often hear the words "he is a true Odd Fellow" or "he is not a true Odd Fellow." What is a true Odd Fellow? Let me offer a suggestion on this subject.

The symbol of our Order is the three links, containing the letters "F - L - T". The letters stand for "friendship, love, truth". Each of these words is the basis for a degree of Odd Fellowship: the first degree (the Degree of Friendship), the second degree (the Degree of Brotherly Love) and the third degree (the Degree of Truth). The links are inter-locked, meaning that they and the words they represent (friendship, love, truth) are bound together, supporting and sustaining each other. The lack of any one of them results on a broken chain. For example, friendship without truth is an empty facade.

So we, Odd Fellows and Rebekahs all, entered into our initiations and received the three degrees, professing an understanding of friendship, love and truth. We took solemn oaths and obligations on these principals and precepts. It is, after all and at bottom, the essence of Odd Fellowship. Without the binding obligations to friendship, love and truth, we might as well be bird watchers, sports fans, or chess club members. Friendship, love and truth make us uniquely Odd Fellows.

But let me ask all of you three questions. And be honest because we don't need to answer these questions to me. We just need to answer them to yourselves, in the privacy of your mirror.

Do we, in our daily lives, follow these precepts of friendship, love and truth? Do we welcome our brothers and sisters of this order with true friendship and brotherly love? Do we always speak the truth to them and to others about them?

If your honest answer to any of these questions is "no" then we have a disconnect. Criticizing our brothers and sisters behind their backs, maligning them to others, is (at best) gossip, and (at worst) not in the spirit of this Order. It can be hurtful and it can be cruel. Let's all rededicate ourselves to the essential spirit of Odd Fellowship contained in the words "friendship, love, truth." If we live within the walls of these precepts, we are, indeed, true Odd Fellows, and we can never go wrong.



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F - L - T

Dave Rosenberg