



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

April 24, 2013

Shortly, we will arrive at Grand Lodge Sessions for another eventful week. There are some issues within the order that need our attention but also many things that we do correctly. A friend of mine was relating Odd Fellow history to me and he said that at least we don't bring guns and knives to lodge anymore and it occurred to me that we may not bring guns and knives in reality but we bring them symbolically. We need to curtail this type of behavior if we want our order to survive and grow into the future. What I believe should be the real asset of our order is our ability to co-exist with our fellow members and to show our congeniality to the world. Conversely, what can be detrimental is when we fail to see that disruptive behavior disrupts much more than a lodge or a group of members it diminishes the order as a whole.

So then how do we settle arguments and yet encourage active discussion within our order? One way to do it is to realize that the person with the other point of view is right, for him or her. And yet, you are right as well. It is possible for both sides of an issue to be correct and still co-exist, because in order for us to continue as a viable fraternal group we need to realize that all points of view are welcome as long as we can contain our anger and fear. Is fear the right word? Yes, it is. What the order reflects is our overwhelming fear of change. Yet change is endemic of life itself. We need to realize this if we are to continue. If we do not come to grips with the idea of change, we are quickly going to fade away as a group. Many members want to encourage widespread change and view this as a path to growth. Other members want to maintain a traditional stance and presume that new members will come naturally. I personally think change is imperative but I do appreciate our history as well. There is nothing wrong with both; in fact, there is a word for it: evolution. To grow, we must evolve.

This year, my hope is to try to unify the order. All of us need to come together and tackle the issue of our declining membership without being vindictive. Nothing harms us more than arguments without the possibility of understanding. We must merge our resources. United we stand, divided we fall. No one can convince me that constant abusive behavior or persistent arguments will garner anything more than our own demise. It is time to see the obvious: unhappiness only breeds more unhappiness, and the only way to counteract unhappiness is to see that a smile on the face of our fellow brother or sister is the greatest gift we can give to each other. I view each and every one of my brothers and sisters as a friend and it is only as friends that we will survive. Anger, hatred, prejudice only succeeds in cutting off our air supply. True growth only comes from seeds planted with friendship, love and truth.

In Friendship, Love, and Truth, Rick Boyles