



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

July 8, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

As you know, the first, second, third and last priority of DMC is to grow our membership. Most of what we've been talking about revolves around bringing in new members to our Order. But of equal concern is our ability to retain members. You know and I know that every Lodge has some members who are active, some members who only occasionally appear at Lodge meetings and functions, and some members who we rarely, if ever, see once they have been initiated. That's a real shame. As a small Order, we frankly need to encourage all our members to be involved in one way or another.

Of course, there are many reasons why some members only occasionally appear and others rarely, if ever, appear. These reasons include health and geography, as well as other life challenges and interests. I would certainly encourage - particularly the smaller Lodges - to reach out to every member on your books to see if they are sick, or in distress, or perhaps are ready to re-involve themselves in the Lodge to a greater or lesser degree.

There is, however, one reason that a member may distance him or herself from a Lodge that is particularly distressing - and it's a reason all of us should strive to address. And that reason is where a member has an issue with another member. Those sorts of issue should not be ignored, or swept under the rug, because they will only fester. Those issues need to be recognized and addressed. We are, after all, brothers and sisters in a fraternity, pledged to friendship, love and truth. No member should feel isolated or alone.

So, here's the deal. If you are a member who is feeling less interested in our Fraternal Order because of the comments or actions of another member that have distressed you, or insulted you, or disparaged you - here is the appropriate plan of action:

1. The first step is to recognize that you have begun to distance yourself from fraternal life because of the comments or actions of another member. Once you have come to this conclusion, you should determine in your own mind if you can put these comments or actions of the other member behind you and move on, or not. If you cannot, then you need to go to step 2.
2. The second step is to talk to the other member face to face and in private. These sorts of matters are best dealt with personally and in an up-front, honest way. Make sure that your discussion is carried on in a quiet, reserved and non-confrontational way. Put yourself into the



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shoes of the other member and ask that other member to put him or herself in your shoes, as well. That usually allows each of you to gain perspective on the issue.

3. If that doesn't work - and I suggest that it will work in the vast majority of cases - find a trusted and respected member of the same Lodge and bring the matter to that person's attention. Ask this third party if he or she will help you to mediate the problem.

4. If that doesn't work, you should bring the matter to the attention of your Lodge's Noble Grand for resolution.

As long as we ALL remember "friendship, love and truth" for and to each other, there should be no internal problem we can't solve.

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Dave Rosenberg