



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

November 29, 2013

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Our brother, Louie Sarmiento, has re-established, re-charged, and re-energized Odd Fellowship in the Philippines. He is a young member of this Order, and he represents just the kind of new blood, new thinking, and new leadership that this ancient fraternity needs to prosper in the 21st Century. If we fail to listen to the Louies among us, we will be the poorer for it.

Following are some important thoughts that Louie recently passed along to me.

F - L - T

Dave Rosenberg

Grand Warden

PASS IT ON - DON'T HOLD ON TOO LONG

Many of our leaders talk about change, improvement and getting in new members. Sadly, many of the Lodges in North America are not getting effective results. If we really want younger people to join this Order, we have to start trusting the Odd Fellowship to THEM. We have to start asking for their ideas and let them lead their Lodge while continue supporting them as mentors and trainers. Many other fraternal organizations have already made this step and are becoming effective in getting and retaining younger members, the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs should learn from those organizations.

Let younger or newer members formulate new ideas. Support their ideas instead of giving them a bad look or instead of criticizing them. Just stop saying "that is not what Odd Fellows is". Webster's dictionary defines an Odd Fellow as a member of a major social and benevolent fraternal organization. So be social (fun) and be charitable. People join organizations or clubs to be happy, not to feel miserable. Our motto is simply friendship, love and truth. Let us translate these into actions. Let us set our minds first to these plain and simple things about Odd Fellowship and stop complicating things with all the "you can't do this" and "you can't do that" mentality. Listen. Listen. Listen. And help deliver results.

Bottom-line, don't hold on too long! Stop always being the boss in your Lodge. Otherwise, your lodge may no longer exist soon! We have Encampments, we have Cantons, etc. These branches were created so that long-time members can advance and not get stuck in the Lodge. Branches



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were designed so that past leaders of the Lodges can still hold leadership in a different unit in IOOF. If you have been leading your Lodge or Grand Lodge for nearly 20 or 30 years, please do find younger or newer members and mentor them to fill out the position you are holding. Pass leadership on to others if you want to see our Order in the future. This doesn't mean that you are already useless. Senior members are needed the same as younger members but stop always being the person in control. Your experiences can be of better use if you allow younger or newer members to fill your position.

I may be younger than many people reading this article but I am definitely not a "younger or newer member in my Lodge". I am 26 years old but I actually hold no elected position in my Lodge other than just a Past Grand way back 3 years ago. I do not hold any appointed position either. Actually, I hold no position in my Lodge anymore and that isn't bad. This actually means progress because new leaders are being developed every year. Passing on the elected- and-appointed-officer positions to younger and newer members means that we are giving room for younger and newer members to lead and put their ideas into actions. It is actually good for the Lodge because senior members will be relieved of the obligations and avoid being "burned-out" which results to further problems in the Lodge such as conflicts, etc. Our roles will be to assist the younger or newer leaders when needed.

For me, having to pass on leadership positions every year can even give greater results for the Lodge. I get to listen to newer ideas that I could have not thought about. I get to experience these new ideas turned into results that everyone enjoy. And best of all, I get to see a younger member become a leader in the Lodge instead of just someone who sits around and do nothing or shy to say something. I get to support them with their decisions and I get to give them advice and comfort when they make bad decisions. Best of all, I get to see a younger or newer member develop into a better person - a more confident, more mature and more dedicated Odd Fellow. It's more fulfilling than holding on to the position all the time. It's more fulfilling than being in control of the decisions all the time. It's better to see newer members stand up, speak up and take actions. Why not try it? Try to be a mentor rather than always being a the leader.

A younger member does not necessarily mean people aged 20 or 30 years old, it may mean that they are members younger than you by age whether it is 50 years old or older. A newer member does not necessarily mean he or she is younger than you by age, it may mean he or she is older than you in terms of age but joined the Order after you joined.

In friendship, love and truth,

Brother Louie