



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

April 26, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Earlier this week I was on a plane flying to Southern California to give a talk, when I ran across an article which contained two amazing facts.

Fact #1 is that 90% of Americans now own cell phones. Fact #2 is that 50% of Americans now own smart phones. Let's take a moment to digest these two facts - because they are significant.

We are at a very transitional place in our American society and culture today. And it's important for those of us born in the 30's, 40's and 50's to understand this transition. I am sure that the vast majority of the folks reading this article - leaders in their respective Lodges - grew up in the tube television and typewriter era. Juxtapose this to the generation of folks who were born in the late 80's and the 1990's - that is a generation that grew up in an electronic and cellular world. We all kind of know this to be true when we ask our grandchildren to adjust the controls on our televisions. But this generational and cultural difference is far more than knowing how to program a remote.

The generation of Americans in their teens and twenties is all about being electronically connected. We're talking about WiFi, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the vast array of social media that is out there in the ether.

Why is this important to Odd Fellowship?

It's important because this new generation is the very generation we need to attract into our Order. It's important because there are many Lodges, Lodge leaders and Lodge members who are completely out of touch with the new generation. And if we remain out of touch, we will have great difficulty bringing in those new young members we need.

How out of touch are we? There are Lodges in our State with members who don't use e-mail. There are Lodges that conduct all their transactions and notifications with paper, and not electronically. There are Lodges that still put out newsletters printed on paper and mailed through the US postal service with postage stamps. There are Lodges that don't have WiFi capability in their Lodge Halls. There are Lodges that don't have Facebook accounts.

Believe me when I tell you that the young men and women under 30 years of age will quickly lose interest in joining a Lodge that is one generation behind the electronic curve.



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Can we adjust to the tools and interests of the new generation? Sure we can. I know Lodges where 100% of the membership are connected via e-mail. I know Lodges that regularly send out an electronic newsletter. I know Lodges that have a Facebook page, and are connected to Twitter and Instagram. I know Lodges that are a WiFi location. And I know Lodges where minutes are sent out to the members electronically soon after the conclusion of a meeting.

Do these electronic connections alter the core purposes or goals of Odd Fellowship? Not at all. These connections are simply modern tools of communication. It's not really any different than the transition from the telegraph to the telephone, or the mail to the facsimile. This is just another transition in the communication age. And we better keep up with it, or be viewed as an Order for grandparents.

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Dave Rosenberg  
Grand Warden