



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

May 7, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Grand Instructor Peter Sellars has penned an article for our DMC newsletter on the subject of "leadership". One of the negative side-effects of diminishing numbers of members in Lodges is that the pool of potential leaders diminishes. Peter's article is worth reading and it's worth some reflection. Hope you enjoy it.

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Dave Rosenberg
Grand Warden

The Reflections Of Good Leadership

Everyday we see people inside and outside of this organization interact with each other in a specific mannerism. We sometimes see our Order's principles expressed by members our Order - the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. These interactions or principles we observe are not always derived by accident. They are learned.

People respond to situations in certain ways based on their experiences or how they were taught or trained. A fireman approaches a fire using trained techniques. I was a bomb maker, an e.o.d. technician in the Marine Corps for many years until my retirement. I approached everything in a trained manner. From my time spent at Staff Non-Commissioned Officers School and in college, I know leadership is essential to navigate efficiently in any setting. And, I know it must be taught and learned.

It does not come naturally. As much as I see people who do not understand this fact, I also see a need to convey that message of LEADERSHIP. A person cannot be an effective leader without having learned and experienced effective examples of leadership.

One or two of my readers may be offended by the previous statement, because they believe leaders are born - and that they are one of those leaders. But, I also know those offended have not been trained. I know they believe leadership is naturally derived. Leadership is not a gift at birth. Your best leaders have been trained either by specific courses, higher education, i.e.



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interpersonal relations type classes combined with a psychology class, or through military training for Staff NCO's or officers' training. And, then by practicing those learned skills.

How this all relates to an organization such as ours - the Odd Fellows - we sometimes see a breakdown in our leadership. No. I am not only speaking of our Grand Masters or Presidents or other elected members specifically. I am talking about the "leaders" in our lodges, who should be leading - or have a basic understanding of basic leadership.

Because our numbers are low and we tend to shove members into the elected chairs because of necessity, we are witnessing the results of that approach from the lodges to the Grand Lodge to those who are at the Sovereign Grand Lodge level. Our Order sometimes lacks leadership.

Leadership techniques are simple. One only needs to listen when a lesson is being taught. Tact, integrity, honesty, knowing when to keep quiet or when to speak, are traits of leadership. Examples of leadership come in different forms. Direct and Passive. In this Order, we see our trained leaders using the direct method far too often. We need to praise the working members in our Order!

I am smiling because I know the direct method is used to convey a message in a stronger approach; usually this approach is for people not responding to the more suggestive - the passive message. We see some of our trained use the direct approach because their message is not being received. It must be clearly and slowly explained to those who cannot understand otherwise.

With all of that said, remember we are talking about "TRAINED LEADERS" who know how to lead, teach, practice our principles, utilize tact, maintain integrity, etc. Nowhere, did this piece say those without training were any less capable people or less likable or less creative or less knowledgeable or without our principles. I merely pointed out a fact that leaders are trained. No member should be criticized for rising up in our ranks. This is written to encourage our membership to be more attentive when selecting its leaders.

I would say the negative comments or heated discussions we hear within some lodges, meetings or sessions are merely, yet mostly, due to a lack of "communication." Leaders bring calmness to such arenas and know how to de-escalate such situations.

Our annual Educational Membership Seminar has a segment on LEADERSHIP. We are looking at developing this lesson further. Brothers and Sisters, look for the trained leaders within our ranks and then allow them to teach those leadership skills to those with open minds and open hearts. Let us strengthen our Order.



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In Friendship, Love, & Truth,

Peter Sellars
Grand Instructor, California IOOF