



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

July 11, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

On March 7, 2014, we published "Part One" of an article, written by Rick Boyles, Past Junior Grand Master of the California Order. It's really all about love, appreciation and tolerance of one another. That's the first ingredient in how we retain our members and how we open our doors to bring in new members. Odd Fellowship should be a big tent, not a small dark room. If we ignore the vast melting pot of American population, we severely limit ourselves as an Order and we deprive ourselves of the fruits of this great fraternal experiment called Odd Fellowship.

And by the way, if you wish to see past DMC articles, they are all available for your reading pleasure at the following website: www.davislodge.org/dedicated-members-for-change/

Here's Rick's article, Part Two.

F - L - T

Dave Rosenberg
Deputy Grand Master

The Greatest of These is Love, Part Two

Those of us who have been in our order for awhile sometimes forget our own core principles, namely, friendship, love, and truth. We often become mired in one issue or another and forget that somehow in the end we must allow all of our fellow members to co-exist. As fractured as some issues become, it is imperative that we keep our total well-being in mind. Different avenues of our order may have unique issues they are grappling with, but the core issue is membership. Turmoil within a lodge diminishes lodge membership and turmoil at a higher level at board meetings and public forums, diminishes it at a higher level as well. We must allow each member to co-exist within their own sphere of existence. The United States of America is showing the world how all walks of life can co-exist with one another. This is not an attitude shared by every country in the world, but the U.S. is lighting the way to the future. Somehow, we all must learn to get along, no matter what our personal issues are, no matter what color our skin is, no matter our sexual orientation, no matter our age, political beliefs, or religious preference. We are all human beings, we all have hearts and souls, and we must learn to express a high level of sensitivity with one another. To me, this is what will light our way to the future.



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I like to write controversial articles concerning difficult subjects, but I certainly understand other opinions. When I wrote my article suggesting that those who want to should march in the Gay Pride Parade, I knew it would cause consternation from some, but I also found that a number of members already participate in the parade. One member who opposed it said that the Gay Pride Parade is just composed of splinter groups, however, the S.F. Chronicle estimated over one million people were in attendance, so if it was a splinter group, it was one of the most organized, largest splinter groups I have ever seen.

The demographics of society in general have changed entirely over the last 50 years. Not long ago, it was announced that in the state of California, white Anglo-Saxons were no longer in the majority. And yet, I saw many lodges in my years serving as an elective officer where all members of a lodge were older white members, often all men. This is clearly not reflective of the communities in which these lodges reside, and I feel that this is a pivotal issue within our order. If we look at a lodge and it contains members whom are no longer even reflective of their own communities, then failure is the ultimate path for that lodge. Certainly, we don't accept members without assuring ourselves that they are good human beings, but when we shutter our doors and say only white men over 60 need apply, we are clearly sending the message that other cultures are not accepted. Look at successful lodges, and you will see a more democratic demographic mix. Look at failing lodges and you will see an older, often dying group of white men, sometimes well-meaning, but perhaps afraid to realize that the end of their beloved lodge is near because they fail to see the changing composure of the outside world. California has become such a vibrant, diverse state, that to accept a lodge any less diverse will quickly lead to its failure. If we agree that our founding fathers of America were correct in declaring that "all men are created equal" then we should stop assuming that our lodges are unique to older white men. The fact that pandering to older white men is the way to the future is succinctly a plan to accept failure. This demographic shift our state and country is going through will not recede - if anything it will accelerate: not to accept homosexuals, women, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Muslims, or any other of the myriad of cultures within our great union is not only foolhardy, it is extremely short-sighted. In order to grow, we need to realize that of all our favorite words in our order, the greatest of these is love. If we don't show the world at large our love, how do we expect the world to reciprocate?

Other members object to the idea of change. To me, this is their privilege to object, and if their own lodge is able to continue without substantive change, then all the power to them. However, if a lodge resists change and falls below a normal quorum of members in attendance (5), then change certainly seems necessary. But change is not a requirement of anyone, although as fellow members and leaders of our Order Peter Sellars and Dave Rosenberg have pointed out, change is inherent in our order's history and those who oppose change perhaps are ignorant of our history. Also, quite a few Grand Masters in their time have spoken about change in their



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years, yet now they object to any type of new change, which seems a bit hypocritical, but many of us become full of ourselves, and forget that the main objective to our officers and centralized boards is to maintain the health of our order, not to impose our own image of the order. Change is evolution, pure and simple, and is really not stoppable. The premise that somehow we can remain immersed in 1850, 1930, or 1960 is ludicrous. We have to deal with today's world, and today's world is more complex and moves quicker than those earlier times. Even in the movie and novel "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald comes the realization that we can revisit history but we can't relive it. We need to move forward.

All of the things we have had in our order, and those which are still functional, are admirable, but in order to continue to have these things, we need to adapt to today. Yet, our core beliefs of friendship, love and truth are more important than ever. When our order numbered in the hundreds of thousands or millions, we could have disagreements which caused nary a ripple in the general mood of the order. Now, a disagreement within a lodge or a board or a committee, can decimate that unit. Not only do we need to concern ourselves with continuance but also with the fragility of a member's loss. All members are fragile, valuable to the whole and indispensable to our future. Let's all remember that Friendship, Love and Truth are the ideals which we can always share to the outside world and to each other.

In F., L., & T., Rick Boyles