



Independent Order of Odd Fellows  
Dedicated Members for Change

July 25, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

One of the founders of DMC, Rick Boyles, who has served this Order in many capacities, most recently as Grand Master, has penned another reflection (below) expounding on a line of dialog from a Clint Eastwood movie and applying it to the Odd Fellows. How does he do it? You will just have to read his article to find out.

F - L - T

Dave Rosenberg  
Deputy Grand Master

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Endeavor to Persevere

There's a humorous line in one of the best Clint Eastwood movies, "The Outlaw Josey Wales" said by the great character actor, Chief Dan George, when he was playing an Indian who actually met the Secretary of the Interior. He said that the Secretary had some of the Chief's tribe dress up like typical citizens and then took their picture and the Secretary said that they should "endeavor to persevere". Chief Dan George said that they thought about that awhile and then declared war on the U.S.

Some talk about change as if it is the enemy. If anything, static behavior is the enemy. Not to change is the more basic problem. We have gotten ourselves in this state because we have failed to adapt to the modern world. Just because the code has a wonderful statement that says that within our lodges we are insulated from the outside world, it clearly does not attempt to imply that the world itself comes to a stop. This is impossible. Surely, all among us must realize that. If anything, the sum of mankind's knowledge increases daily, and the natural progression of the world is unstoppable.

We have a number of members who like to insinuate themselves into every situation and then quote the code. And it's not unusual for some of these members to quote the code, without have actually read the language they "believe" is in the code. The code or all codes, in fact are meant as guidelines, nothing more. We were never meant to use them as bludgeons. They are not to be used as blockades for progress. If anything, a code is nothing more than guidelines by which we should operate. If we really want to rejuvenate our order, we would throw away our codes and just speak common sense, because the codes, if written properly, are just the compilation of



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common sense in print. Having layers of codes by which we seem to guide our lodges was never the original idea of our order, and most members now see that this has muddied what are generally held beliefs. Almost every year at Sessions we talk about re-vamping the code. Did you know that at one time the only code by which a lodge operated was by its own by-laws?

We have some people who still object to change. Ask them what then is their idea for growth? There is a belief that we should do nationwide advertising. First, we have to have something to advertise. This will fail until we realize that first we have to exhibit substance within each lodge. If you advertise something it has to promise substance. Lodges that are failing have no substance, therefore an ad serves no purpose whatsoever. This would be like saying we have tomatoes on sale but none are available locally. We must first offer a viable product. Simply saying that we believe in Friendship, Love and Truth is certainly admirable but it does not promise the onlooker anything of substance. When we were growing as an order, we buried the dead and educated the orphan. We have to offer some updated benefit. Having some photogenic member chant Friendship, Love and Truth and inviting outsiders to pot lucks from a television monitor does nothing.

We also say that we need to attract the youth. I agree entirely, except we need to do something that attracts attracts the youth. When you were young, did you like to hang out with the elderly? Most do not. If we really want to attract the young, we need to give them something that appeals to them without putting an old face on it. Like it or not, 80-90% of us are elderly. If we realize that, we would see that the elderly don't present an inviting picture to the young. My feeling is that if we are truly going to attract the young, we need to do it in such a way, that we are not directly involved. Our order is failing because we treat newcomers as if they are new versions of the old us. They are not. Newcomers are different than we are. Of course, this only emphasizes an older member's fear.

If, as that old Secretary of the Interior says we need to "endeavor to persevere", then we should just close up shop now. We will not succeed. We need to embrace change and growth, and realize that through these actions lies our path to the future.

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