



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

December 13, 2014

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

When I was elected Grand Warden in 2013, and again when I was elected Deputy Grand Master in 2014, I said that there were two major problems facing Odd Fellowship: (1) the steady decline in our membership, and (2) the failure by some of our members to be respectful, kind and cordial to other members (essentially, the failure to exercise the precepts of friendship, love and truth).

In varying degrees, those problems are still with us today.

Junior Past Grand Master Rick Boyles, one of the founders of DMC, has written an article focusing on the latter problem. It's worth a read.

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Dave Rosenberg
Deputy Grand Master

Old Men's Paranoia and the Dissolution of our Order

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows is an old group and many of its more prominent members are old as well.

In my years as an elective officer I found many lodges and group events overrun by members who have different levels of paranoid fears. We have to realize that this is something that should not command our lives either individually or collectively. The structure of the order in my mind is a little unstable due to the constant changing of elective officers and other positions of authority. While I am among the first to encourage change, I also see the value in a stable environment. Committees which are structured around common goals are often unseated due to personal preference or a political view of one type or another. When there is a personality conflict, we mistakenly allow a political stance or a single personality to overwhelm the rest of us. If we are true to our nature, we would realize that our order should not change constantly but thoughtfully. In my own view, I see both change and stability of value. In order to grow, we need to prize and value both.

We are fortunate in our state that although our numbers are diminishing, they now appear to be leveling off. While I believe much of that is due to our own group, The Dedicated Members



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for Change, I believe it also has to do with other factors, including increased life span, our great staffing of many boards and committees and our constant vigilance throughout our state. Our Grand Lodge Office is clearly one of the best in the U.S. and our Grand Lodge Board of Directors is an exemplary group made up of hard-working individuals who do everything in their power to maintain stability throughout our state. Many of our members have not ventured outside the state of California, but if you did, you might view our own state with a refreshed vision. Politics aside, our state's decline in members has slowed and almost reversed itself due to the many cohesive groups we have guiding it. While I often find it mystifying why anyone would oppose change, change for change's sake does no one any good either. If we are to grow, we need to do so consciously and not haphazardly.

Often times, many of us when we attend group functions are apprehensive, afraid to face problems directly or members who seem to politically oppose our beliefs. But this should not be the case. The way I view life is as old Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill would say, "after 5 o'clock we are all the same" - in other words, politics should not commandeer our general sensibilities. I like to think I have friends who are pro change and anti change. Friendship is founded upon affection not upon political beliefs. Of course, one of the greatest traits our wonderful country has is a smooth transition of power. Other countries can be decimated, and often are, by varied political or religious beliefs. Our nation is the best in history because we can see the value in opposing beliefs and not harm each other because of them. Whatever we do in California and throughout our order we should not lose sight of the prize - which is growth.

If we view each other as friends, perhaps our paranoia will fade. Fear does nothing but cloud our judgment. All of us have value and worth. Have a Merry Christmas.

In Friendship, Love, and Truth, Rick Boyles