

** From January 1, 2012 **

I found this e-mail that I had received from an individual who has been involved in Square Dancing for about as long as I have. I thought that I would pass it along to everyone just in case you were looking for a New Years resolution or maybe you're looking for something to motivate your clubs membership!

Thank you and Happy New Year!!

Bobby Poyner

Whenever people come together for a common goal or cause, a group is formed into a collective organization or club. The length of survival of that purpose is determined solely on the dedication and sacrifice of the individual members.

No club can survive long without people willing to do the work necessary to keep it moving. It requires a dedication of talent and of individual time which often includes a willingness to invest some of one's own money for the good of everyone. The greatest contribution anyone can make to the health of the club is support by attendance. Paying annual dues and then never or seldom participating does the survival no good. It is better to regularly participate as a guest then to donate a small amount once a year and call it paying your dues.

The next most crucial thing for any club is the constant influx of new members. The reality in any organization is that current members quit, move, age and unfortunately die. A constant transition is typical because of the dynamics of life. New members are the life-blood of any club. Whether they come from a structured learning environment such as a class or whether they come from guests who are made to feel welcome and then wish to become part of the club. Both are sources of new members.

For either source to help increase or even just stabilize membership requires dedication and hard work from the current members. It dictates a sacrifice of time to attend classes and a sacrifice of time to visit with the guests. One must have a sincerity of wanting to continue the club and see it grow. The health of the club depends on individuals willing to commit to it. When the club no longer has individuals willing to come and support classes or willing to mingle and visit with guests; then that organization is dead. Yes, it may still be meeting off of previous support, but not for long.

When apathy is the norm, when a lack of dedication and commitment exists, it is just a matter of time. Those few who do care become frustrated and leave because they are tired of trying all alone, beating their head against the wall with no results. Or even worse, with results that are then driven away by the uncaring. It is at this point a decision must be made. To stay in frustration or to abandon and move on to others who truly care and are willing to help.

Help with support, time and talent. Help financially. Help with good citizenship towards guests and new people.

Any individual will seek a place where they are the most comfortable. Does the current group do this;

making guests and new people comfortable? Do they “feel” welcome? Are you doing your part the best that you can? Really, or are you now apathetic about the survival of the club?

If so, then why did you reach this point? What can you do to change it? Is it even worth changing?

It will not change from the outside. It can only change from those individuals on the inside desiring positive change. Are you going to renew your dedication and support to help create this positive change? Or continue the status quo?

Please think this over carefully.

Whether the club lives or dies is up to you, yes you, the one and only, single, lone individual. One person can and does make a difference, especially when many ones come together.

This is the crossroad of which we now find ourselves. Which fork will be taken?

**Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;**

**Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,**

**And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.**

**I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.**

Robert Frost (1874–1963)