

The "Real" Problem

Brothers,

Over the last couple of months, I have seen posts of requests for help regarding how to solve a particular "problem" that various chapters were experiencing. \$\$, house occupancy, rush, etc. I would like to suggest that, when your chapter is experiencing such a "problem" that you step back and ask yourself if "it" is the real problem or is "it" simply a symptom of the real problem. I would hazard a guess it is only a symptom. Trying to pound on the symptom without first fixing the problem is like trying to carve or paint rotten wood. It either won't work at all or it comes apart/resurfaces rather quickly. If we remain focused on the symptom, we are destined to frustration unless the problem gets fixed by a different effort and its symptoms start to clear up accordingly.

I submit that the #1 problem is that your members don't, in their heart of hearts, believe that their chapter is worthy of their involvement. They walk around claiming they are "Proud to be Delta Chi" or other such statements but they really don't believe it. Thus, they move out of the house, fail to keep up on their dues, either don't show up for rush at all or make less than a full effort if they do show up (normally to simply avoid the fines passed to "solve" the lack of participation in rush!!), etc.

Until the chapter starts (returns to) meeting the needs of its members, the members will fail to meet the needs of the chapter. Sure, some of your members can withstand the neglect (or even negative treatment) of their needs longer than others. They can either see or simply hope for a better tomorrow or are motivated by a different drummer. Now, it would be easy for some to jump to the conclusion that those "brothers" are less committed to Delta Chi. Maybe, maybe not. That we only need those who are willing to take the worst adversity and "stick it out" and prove that they are "real" brothers". Well, I suppose that we could make it REAL BAD and then we could rid ourselves of each and every "pretender". But I question that logic. It's sort of like a guy seeing how badly he can treat his wife before she leaves him as a measure of her love for him. I don't get it. Like Stephen Covey says in one of his books (I forget which), if the marriage is struggling you need to increase the positive interactions and love will grow. I think that that is true with fraternity and brotherhood. Fraternity is about nurturing brotherhood, not testing it.

In the Chapter Retreat BRIEF is a Needs Assessment Form. It asks questions like:

1. What are your hobbies/leisure time activities?
2. What kind of parties/other social activities do you like best?
3. What sports do you enjoy participating in?
4. What sports do you enjoy watching?
5. What self-improvement activities do you enjoy?
6. What cultural activities do you enjoy?

Try something. Picture in your mind (or better yet, just do it) the following: At a chapter meeting, have each brother answer the above questions (or others you feel are

appropriate). One-three answers each. No looking at your neighbor's paper, it's what *you* like. Collect them. Over the next few days, tabulate them and list the answers to each question in order of frequency. Example: (self-improvement) jogging-14, weightlifting-8, read a good book-6, read the Bible-5, etc. Now, after writing these all on a big posterboard, hold a retreat. Start the retreat by asking the members in attendance, "What activities does this chapter engage in on at least a monthly basis?" Write the answers on a chalk board. What you will get is: Hold Chapter meetings, play intramurals, party (one or two ways). That's about it for a struggling or "at risk" chapter. Now, put the posterboard up next to that list. The degree to which the Activities of the Chapter have little to do with the Needs of its members is the measure of what most chapters are calling their "motivation problem" and they are blaming the members for their lack of "brotherhood" and passing fines to "solve it" or posting requests on the discussion group for how to raise more money when the house is half empty (Note to any of the most recent chapters to post such requests: this was not aimed specifically at you but at an all too large percentage of our chapters!!!). Now, back to the retreat. Break the attendees into small groups of roughly 4-7. Have each group develop a list of activities that are designed to meet the top two to three needs in *each* category. Using the "Ratchet System" (also in the Retreat BRIEF), improve the lists and build commitment to the "new" Delta Chi. Before the end of the Retreat, break the new activities down into their respective areas and give them to the chairman of each area (Rush, brotherhood, social, intramurals, etc.) for their committee to ensure their occurrence.

No "rotten wood" at your chapter? You can still be better. No sense waiting until there is a problem.

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