

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Kansas City Missouri Stake
850 SE Church Road
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Stake Self-Reliance & Emergency Preparedness

Monthly Newsletter



Healthy Thinking Patterns

By Carol Webster

I always thought I'd be a good mom. As a little girl playing house, I tenderly cared for my dolls—but the grown-up reality was much harder than I dreamed. When I had a 4 ½ -year-old daughter and 2-year-old son, my days were filled with cleaning up messes, planning and preparing meals, children being resistant to almost every request and the air was filled with a lot of whining. On top of the “norm”, the nausea and exhaustion from a new pregnancy left me wanting to cry all the time.

Despite waking at 5:30 am for personal scripture study and prayer, reading scripture stories with my kids and consistent Family Home Evening, I was miserable and so were my kids.

A typical scene was something like this. “It’s time to clean up. Let’s get the toys in the box.” They ignore me. After a few attempts and “modelling correct behavior” I snap. My voice becomes louder and more threatening. I see worry and fear as the older one jumps to put some toys away and the younger one runs away. Regret, frustration, tears and exhaustion overcome me. My husband is out of town. How will I make it to bedtime?

I distinctly remember a well-meaning older sister’s comment in a Relief Society lesson, “My daughter believes that her children are wonderful. She adores them and so they respond to her belief.” At the time, that comment made me discouraged and frustrated with myself, but looking back now, I can see she was offering me a key. How could I change my belief? I had to figure that out!

Working in the framework of our beliefs is not just a parenting thing. It is part of any relationship: spouse, roommate, co-workers, teachers, students, bosses, siblings etc. What one believes—how one thinks—determines how we feel and, ultimately, our quality of life.

“Belief is a precious word” Elder Holland once explained, and “an even more precious act.” I have pondered his April 2013 talk for 8 years. He poignantly retells the Bible story of a father bringing his desperately mentally ill son to the Savior to ask for healing help. Jesus said, “If thou) canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth”. The father curiously cries out, “Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief”.

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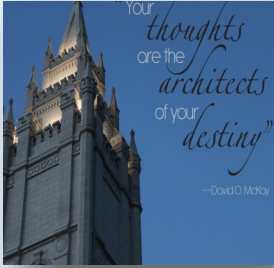


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Spiritual Insights

- Preparation, both spiritual and temporal, can dispel fear
- "...if ye are prepared ye shall not fear" (Doctrine and Covenants 38:30).
- “The need for preparation is abundantly clear. The great blessing of being prepared gives us freedom from fear” (Elder L. Tom Perry)



How does a person change thinking patterns?

- *“Science talks about neural pathways that carry messages in our nervous system (including our brain) for all kinds of functions. Our thoughts are part of that system. The more often, or the more intensely, we think something (whether it is good or bad), the stronger the pathway for that thought becomes.”*
- *“Because God gives us agency, we are agents. The eternal part of us—which is deeper than neurons—has the power to choose our thoughts!”*

~Webster

I have silently cried out to God many times “Help my unbelief”.

What is unbelief? The word “doubt” is the usual synonym, but a variation is useful to me. Instead of “unbelief” I have come to say, “Help my mis-belief”.

In my childhood mind, I believed that being a mother was fun and easy, that children sweetly cooperate and cooking delicious meals would be appreciated. All couples believe marriage will be endlessly blissful when they get engaged. Ditto with dream jobs when we get hired or the birth of a younger siblings that a child has prayed for. Most of us once believed that Santa would bring us presents every Christmas. When we discover we have mis-believed something, it can crush us with disappointment.

There are other more subtle mis-beliefs.

Our beliefs become unhealthy thinking patterns when they sound something like

- I can’t do anything right.
- My life is a mess.
- No one likes me.
- It’s (fill-in-the-blank)’s fault that I am unhappy.
- If I were as smart/funny/pretty as Bob/Jamie/Mary I would be able to have a good grade/be well-liked/be popular.

Such thought patterns can be so subtle, that we are not fully aware they are there.

How does a person change thinking patterns? How can we recognize our mis-beliefs?

Science talks about neural pathways that carry messages in our nervous system (including our brain) for all kinds of functions. Our thoughts are part of that system. The more often, or the more intensely, we think something (whether it is good or bad), the stronger the pathway for that thought becomes. The good news is that we are more than a container of neural pathways!

Because God gives us agency, we are agents. The eternal part of us—which is deeper than neurons—has the power to choose our thoughts! This is awesome in theory, but we all know that there is a gap between what we know or believe is right and our established neural pathways and habits.

For two decades I have studied that gap. I have been led to a variety of professionals and ideas. There are many tools and steps to help overcome unhealthy thinking patterns. Here is one three-step process.

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Be—see—feel

1. Being without doing. We can't change our thinking patterns and unhealthy beliefs if we are always busy, busy, busy. We have to take time to just "be". That is the space of the Spirit and the Spirit will teach us truth line-upon-line. And the truth will set us free. (John 8:32)
2. Bravely seeing truth. In the quiet, we prayerfully ask to see the truth. We cry out in prayer, "Help my unbelief". This tender, vulnerable process happens through personal revelation. The Holy Ghost will reveal to us what our mis-beliefs are. Often these are things we began to believe in our childhood. An outstanding resource to help with this step is the talk [Elder Richard G. Scott gave in October 2009 General Conference](#).
3. Feeling feelings. Once we courageously see that something we have believed to be true is actually not true, it inevitably brings up strong feelings. Feelings (a.k.a. emotions) are amazing chemical reactions in our physical body given to all humans to guide them.

The feelings that come in the process of seeking to change unhealthy thinking patterns are often uncomfortable and unwanted. The temptation is to avoid, bury or control these feelings.

Instead, simply feel the feelings without judging them. These feelings are meant to *help* us not discourage us. Let the

chemistry take its course. Breathe. Be still. Know God. This is how we hand the old mis-belief to God and apply the atonement of Christ in a very personal and cleansing way. This is how He changes our hearts. This is how we grow.

Repeating this 3-step process (along with other tools and steps) has changed my thinking patterns.

Like anything we want to learn, it takes persistent work, but the more I slow down and just "be", bravely see my "mis-beliefs" then gently hold space for myself as I "feel feelings", the more my thinking has shifted to Nephi-like beliefs.



Thoughts like

- I can.
- I will.
- With God.
- I am grateful.

become stronger neural pathways.

Over time, I developed healthier, more realistic beliefs and the dark cloud over me and my children slowly, but permanently, lifted.

I invite all to take King Benjamin's advice in Mosiah 4:30 to "watch yourselves, your thoughts and your words and your deeds". Recognize when beliefs enter the realm of unhealthy thinking patterns.

Practicing the trio of "be—see—feel—" is a good start as you "continue in the faith" and trust that God will lead you to tools that will redirect your neural pathways so your thinking patterns become increasingly more healthy and useful.

~Webster



Developing an
Effective
Emergency
Communication
Plan

Emergency Preparedness

Lesson #4: Communication

Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them. (Ezekiel 38:7)

One evening, while out with her husband, Sister Smith handed her cell phone, purse and jacket to her husband to hold for her while she used the restroom. When she came back he was not there. She looked all around for him, asking others if they had seen him, but he could not be found. She decided to wait where she was. While she waited her heart sank as she thought through various plans of action in case there was a problem. Without her cell phone she had no way to contact anyone. While she could borrow someone's phone, she hadn't memorized any phone numbers; she had no way to contact anyone for help. All information was stored on her phone. After 20 minutes of worry, her husband came back - he had been helping someone in the parking lot. While this story has a happy ending it emphasized to Sister Smith just how dependent she was upon her cell phone and just how precarious her situation could be if she didn't have it with her. She resolved to memorize a few phone numbers so that she could help herself should she be in real need again.

On May 22, 2011 a devastating EF-5 tornado destroyed much of Joplin, MO. Two cell phone towers were completely destroyed and the other towers in the city were quickly overwhelmed. It took cell phone companies more than two weeks to construct and restore cell phone service in the area. Until then, family members and friends, both in and out of the immediate area had limited ways to communicate. Although it was quickly discovered that certain carriers allowed customers to text other customers without the cell phone towers, this did not apply to all providers and all customers. Stake and ward leaders (many of whom lost their own homes and businesses) were desperately trying to account for members safety and whereabouts, trying to organize and assist with rescue and clean-up and to contact church headquarters, who had already started sending assistance and supplies. Please note that while not everyone in Joplin was in the path of destruction, everyone was affected by the devastation. Their home or business might still be intact, but their ability to contact and communicate was destroyed. Internet service was also disrupted. Power in many areas was destroyed and not restored for several weeks. This affected the ability to communicate since many devices could not be powered on and batteries not available.

Both examples actually happened. Together they show a spectrum of communication needs in a crisis or emergency situation.

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- **Activity (5 minutes):** Imagine that an emergency has occurred and that you are separated from your family and friends. Individually write a list of topics that would be urgent to communicate with your loved ones.
- **Discuss:** As a family, share and discuss the items you wrote in Step 1.
- **Read:** Communication networks, such as mobile phones and computers, may not work reliably during emergency situations. Creating an emergency communications plan, such as was prepared in the previous lesson, will help you and your family members know how to reach each other and where to meet up in an emergency.

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day-Saints, we have responsibility to those we minister to and to anyone in our neighborhood. During times of crisis, it is important that we also communicate with these individuals and families.

Within the first 24-hours after the Joplin tornado crisis, local church leaders were asked to contact each member of their wards who were affected by the tornado and assess needs. This included less-active members and others who many not immediately come to mind when thinking of their ward. Many members of the church were contacted - by friends, and not their Visiting or Home Teachers (now Ministering Brothers and Sisters). Many others were never contacted but had to reach out for themselves. When asked later as to why this was many members replied, it didn't occur to them to reach out to others, others assumed someone else was doing it. It became apparent that this important work of the Savior had not been a priority for many members. One brother in a leadership position admitted that it was humiliating to stand before his ward, and the Lord, and admit that he had to play catch up and not be ready to serve as he knew he should.

Another sister commented, "a crisis does not make you a good minister, unless you have already gained their trust and formed a relationship. The crisis strengthened the bonds that were already in place and revealed weaknesses that were already in place".

Ponder: Take time to evaluate your own ministering assignments. Do you know who your families are? Do they know who you are? If they were in a crisis, would your

name come to their mind as someone they could call upon for help? Do you know the names and phone numbers of your ministering brothers and sisters? Do you feel comfortable contacting them for help and assistance? How long do you think it would take to contact each member of your ward should an emergency happen and there was no cell phone service? Why would it be important for the ward leaders to know how each member of the ward is doing?

School, Childcare, Caregiver, and Workplace Emergency Plans

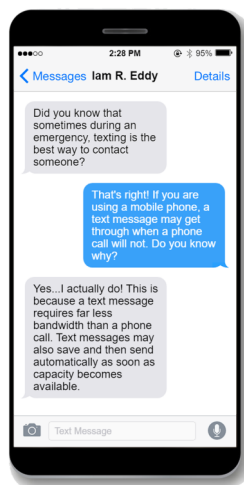
In addition to knowing how to communicate with family members it is important to know the emergency plans of all the places your family may be - work, school, daycare, etc. Having emergency plans in place is part of doing business in today's world. These plans should be available to you.

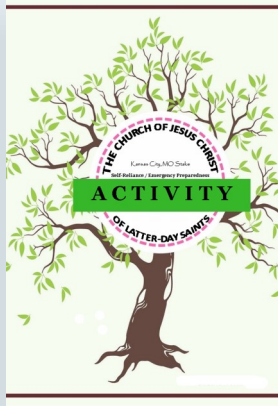
Discuss these plans with children and let them know who could pick them up in an emergency. Make sure your household members with phones are signed up for alerts and warnings from their school, workplace, and/or local

government. For children without mobile phones, make sure they know to follow instructions from a responsible adult, such as a teacher or principal. Please note that many schools will not release students during emergency situations. This will be noted in their plans as well as information as to exactly when and how the students will be released, what information you will need to collect your child, etc.

(When we set goals for this week's lesson, getting a copy of these disaster plans should be on it.)

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Activity (5 minutes)

If you have your mobile phone with you, add at least one emergency contact under the name “In Case of Emergency” or “ICE”. This will help someone identify your emergency contact if needed. Inform your emergency contact of any medical issues or other requirements you may have. Emergency personnel look for this information in case they need to contact someone on your behalf. Also, create group text for every member of your household if you haven’t already done so.

Just prior to the Joplin tornado emergency sirens went off, as part of a national emergency warning system. Because Joplin is in a tornado-prone area and sirens go off multiple times per year many residents ignored them causing them to waste precious moments to get to areas of safety and to protect life.

Ponder: The Lord is constantly sending us sirens and alerts to guard and protect us. Can you name some of the Lord’s sirens? What do these ‘sirens’ communicate to us? What happens if we fail to heed these warning sirens? After discussing your communication plans with your family council, practice your plan. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Practice texting and calling. Have each person practice sending a text message or calling your out-of-town contact and sending a group text to your mobile phone group list. Discuss what information you should send by text. You will want to let others know you are safe and where you are. Short messages like “I’m OK. At library” are best.
2. Talk about who will be the lead person to send out information about the designated meeting place for the household.
3. To show why it’s important to keep phone numbers written down, challenge your household members to recite important phone numbers from memory— now ask them to think about doing this in the event of an emergency.
4. Make sure everyone, including children, knows how and when to call 911 for help. **DO NOT PRACTICE CALLING 911 BY ACTUALLY CALLING 911.** You should only call 911 when there is a life-threatening emergency.
5. Review, update, and practice your Family Emergency Communication Plan at least once a year, or whenever any of your information changes.
6. After you practice, talk about how it went. What worked well? What can be improved? What information, if any, needs to be updated? If you make updates, remember to print new copies of the plan for everyone.

Commitments:

1. I will discuss my Family Emergency Communications Plan in my family council.
2. I will get copies of my children’s schools’/childcare’s emergency plans.
3. _____

Resources

HAM Radio Technical Amateur Radio Operations (Ham Radio) can be a great resource for keeping in touch in an emergency or disaster situation. Each country has their own regulations and controlling government agencies for Ham Radio licensure and auditing. Ham Radio is controlled by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for the United States.

In order to legally operate a Ham Radio, licensure is required. The American Radio Relay League (ARRL) conducts the tests for licensure on behalf of the FCC. ARRL tests are held in major metropolitan areas regularly and are fairly inexpensive and at times free. Contact your local ARRL in order to find the next testing locations, dates, and times in your area.

12 Principles of Self-Reliance

The Lord has declared, “It is my purpose to provide for my saints” (D&C 104:15). This revelation is a promise that the Lord will provide temporal blessings and open the door of self-reliance. He has also declared that “it must needs be done in [His] way” (D&C 104:16). To receive the blessings of self-reliance, we must accept and live the principles of self-reliance, which include the following:

- Exercise Faith in Jesus Christ (D&C 104:15)
- Use Time Wisely (Alma 34:32)
- Be Obedient (D&C 130:20–21)
- Manage Money (D&C 104:78)
- Work: Take Responsibility (D&C 42:42; 2 Nephi 2:16, 26)
- Solve Problems (Ether 2:18–19, 23; 3:1, 4)
- Become One, Work Together (Moses 7:18; D&C 104:15–17)
- Communicate: Petition and Listen (D&C 8:2)
- Persevere (Hebrews 12:1; D&C 58:4)
- Show Integrity (Mosiah 4:28; Job 27:5; Articles of Faith 1:13)
- Seek Learning and Education (D&C 88:118–119)
- Stay On Task, Receive Ordinances (D&C 84:20; D&C 136:4; 1 Nephi 18:2–3)

Self-Reliance Services

What is Self-Reliance?

“Self-reliance is the ability, commitment, and effort to provide the spiritual and temporal necessities of life for self and family” (Handbook 2: Administering the Church[2010], 6.1.1).

President Thomas S. Monson has counseled, “[Self-reliance] is an essential element in our spiritual as well as our temporal well-being.” (“Guiding Principles of Personal and Family Welfare,” Ensign, Sept. 1986, 3)

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