

George Albert Smith, Lesson 21: The Power of Kindness

Monte F. Shelley, 9 Dec. 2012

Quotes

- Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened.
- Many folks want to serve God, but only as advisers.
- Don't let your worries get the best of you.
Remember, Moses started out as a basket case.
- If God is your Co-pilot, ... swap seats!
- Be ye fishers of men. You catch 'em — He'll clean 'em.
- Quit griping about your church.
If it were perfect, you couldn't belong.
- God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.
- Prayer: Don't tell God what to do, just report for duty.
- He who angers you, controls you!
- We're called to be witnesses, not lawyers or judges.
- God Himself doesn't propose to judge a man until he is dead.
So why should you?

Elder Holland was talking a stake conference where he used to reside. He asked an older sister he knew to stand.

He said, "Have you been rebaptized?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

"I have it on good authority that you qualify for rebaptism because you have had enough body parts replaced." (Don Fossum)

Every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God. (Moro 7:13)



BSA Aims and methods: Christ and Satan had same goal. Christ invites and entices, but Satan commands and compels.

SOED wisdom: (1) capacity of judging rightly in matters relating to life and conduct; *soundness of judgment in the choice of means and ends ...*

1. Workers using offensive language (GAS)

"Once on a hot summer day there was some problem happening under the street near Grandfather's home in Salt Lake City, and some workers from the city had come to fix it. It was hot outdoors, the sun shone fiercely, and the job at hand was a pick-and-shovel kind that made the sweat pour off the men's faces and backs as they dug into the roadway. The workers were not careful with their language, or maybe their mothers hadn't taught them any better, but they were swearing and using terrible language. Their words soon became offensive to many of the neighbors whose windows were open to catch any breeze that might help to cool them.

"Someone went out and asked the men to stop their foul talk, and in the process pointed out that Brother Smith lived right there—couldn't they show some respect and keep quiet, please? With that the men let loose a new string of bad words. Quietly, Grandfather prepared some lemonade and placing some glasses and the pitcher on a tray he carried it out to the struggling men with, 'My friends, you look so hot and tired. Why don't you come and sit under my trees here and have a cool drink?' Their anger gone, the men responded to the kindness with meekness and appreciation. After their pleasant little break they went back to their labor and finished their work carefully and quietly."

- You can find good in everyone if you will but look for it.
- Meet your problems in the spirit of love and kindness toward all.

George Albert Smith "loved everyone because he could see the good within them. He did not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance, but he loved the sinner because he knew that God

was love, and that it is God's love that regenerates human souls and may, by that process, transform the sinner into a saint."

2. Spirit of kindness, not harshness and criticism (GAS)

I feel sad sometimes when I hear the unkind things that are spoken, not only of people in our Church, but of people in the world. Unkind things are not usually said under the inspiration of the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord is a spirit of kindness; it is a spirit of patience; it is a spirit of charity and love and forbearance and long suffering; and there are none of us who do not need all these virtues that are the result of the possession of the Spirit of our Heavenly Father.

Lucifer is exercising every means to destroy the souls of the human family. He ... tempt[s] one individual to destroy the reputation of another by saying unkind things of them.

As a people we are advised not to be critical, not to be unkind, not to speak harshly of those with whom we associate. We ought to be the greatest exemplars in all the world in that regard.

Aren't we rather prone to see the limitations and the weaknesses of our neighbors? Yet that is contrary to the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is a class of people who find fault and criticize always in a destructive way. There is a difference in criticism. If we can criticize constructively under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord, we may change beneficially and properly some of the things that are being done. But if we have the spirit of fault finding, of pointing out the weaknesses and failings of others in a destructive manner, that never comes as a result of the companionship of the Spirit of our Heavenly Father and is always harmful.

Constructive criticism is an oxymoron: All criticism is inherently destructive and negative, however we may attempt to window dress it, or "sandwich it" between positive statements. Anything constructive is associated with growth, which requires a person to be open, not in a defensive state of mind. (Ray Williams, <http://business.financialpost.com/2012/11/13/constructive-criticism-is-an-oxymoron-we-should-do-away-with/>)

The Builder by Lou Holtz (retired football coach)

I saw a group of men in my home town.
I saw a group of men tearing a building down.
With a heave and a ho and a mighty yell,
They swung a beam and the sidewalk fell.
And I said to the foreman, "Are these men skilled,
The type you'd hire if you wanted to build?"
And he laughed and said, "Why, no indeed."
He said, "Common labor's all I need.
For I can tear down in a day or two
What it took a builder ten years to do."
And I thought to myself as I walked away,
"Which of these roles am I going to play?
Am I the type that constantly tears down
As I make my way, foolishly, around?
Or am I the type that's trying to build with care?
In hope that my team'll be glad I was there?"

3. Look for and praise virtues (GAS)

Many of us live in such an atmosphere that we are almost dumb when it comes to praising somebody else. We seem unable to say the things that we might say ... to the blessing of others. Let us look for the virtues of our associates and observing them make them happy by commending them.

I plead with you my brethren and my sisters, let us be generous with one another. Let us be as patient with one another as we

would like others to be with us. Let us see the virtues of our neighbors and our friends and speak of those virtues, not find fault and criticize. If we will do that we will radiate sunshine, and those who know us best will love us.

- Better at looking for and finding fault. (Metaphor: Life is like being on a lifeboat. A leak must be fixed quickly or you die.)
- Bob Keiser: 3x5 card to count + vs – interactions with son.
- Fast from fault finding.

4. Kindness invites people to change (GAS)

There are those who will make mistakes. There are those among us today that have gone astray, but they are the children of our Lord and he loves them. He has given to you and to me the right to go to them in kindness and love and with patience and with a desire to bless, seek to win them from the mistakes that they are making. It is not my privilege to judge some of these that have made mistakes and are still making mistakes, unless I am so called by reason of the authority that may be conferred upon me.

Let us not complain at our friends and our neighbors, because they do not do what we want them to do. Rather let us love them into doing the things that our Heavenly Father would have them do. We can do that, and we cannot win their confidence or their love in any other way.

What a joy, what a comfort, what a satisfaction can be added to the lives of our neighbors and friends through kindness. How I would like to write that word in capital letters and emblazon it in the air. Kindness is the power that God has given us to unlock hard hearts and subdue stubborn souls and bring them to an understanding of His purposes.

5. Kindness invites children to listen to counsel (GAS)

It is our privilege as well as our duty to take sufficient time to surround our children with safeguards and to so love them and earn their love that they will be glad to listen to our advice and counsel.

6. Mother on train to see her boy in hospital (GAS)

A few years ago I was on a train. ... I saw ... a woman that I had known. ... She said: "My youngest boy, a few weeks ago, left home ... and the first intimation that we had of his whereabouts was when a telegram came from the Mercy hospital in Portland, stating that our boy was there sick in that hospital. ... There was only one thing to do, and that was to raise means and go at once to that boy." ... [After we arrived,] I went [to the hospital]. ... That sweet mother [was] sitting by ... her boy who had ... pneumonia. ... She was not scolding him because he had been unmindful of her; she was not resentful of his thoughtlessness and of his carelessness, she was just thankful to be with her boy ... [who] was about 16. ... She was trying to encourage him by telling him the things that would make him happy and contented, holding out to him the opportunities that would be his when he was well. In the place of distress and anguish ... there was a perfect halo of light and of peace and happiness spread over the countenance of that boy as he looked up into [her] face.

7. Definition

SOED *kindness* 1. Kinship; natural affection arising from this. 5. Kind feeling, affection, love.

HEB: chesedh 2617 [BDB 338] *goodness, kindness* 1. *Kindness* of men towards men in doing favors and benefits, 2. *Kindness* (especially as extended to the lowly, needy and miserable), *mercy*, II. *Of God kindness, lovingkindness* in condescending to the needs of his creatures in *redemption, preserving life, ...*

A Scout is Kind. A Scout knows there is strength in being gentle. He treats others as he wants to be treated. Without good reason, he does not harm or kill any living thing.

8. Kindness and Strangers

³⁵ I was a stranger, and ye took me in: ³⁶ Naked, and ye clothed me: ... Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. (Mt 25:34–40)

"On a cold winter morning, the street cleaning crew [in Salt Lake City] was removing large chunks of ice from the street gutters. ... One [temp worker] wore only a lightweight sweater and was suffering from the cold. ... [President Smith] asked the worker, '... Where is your coat?' The man replied that he had no coat to wear. [He] then removed his own overcoat, handed it to the man and said, 'This coat is yours. It is heavy wool and will keep you warm. I just work across the street.'" (GAS13; Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, May 1990, 47)

Young Heber J. Grant worked hard in his thin, worn jacket. His family was poor and didn't have money to buy a new coat. Heber's mother surprised him when she gave him a new, warm winter coat. She had worked hard to sew it for him. Heber thanked his mother and rushed out the door to play. His coat was so warm he hardly noticed the cold weather! As Heber raced down the streets, something caught his eye as he ran past an alley. Heber slowly peeked around the corner. He watched as a young boy in a thin, ragged sweater crouched in front of an exhaust grate to try to get warm. Heber knew how cold that boy must be. He knew the boy needed help. When Heber came home, his mother immediately noticed he was not wearing his coat. Heber, where is your coat?" she asked. Heber ... [said] he gave the coat to the boy in the alley. He began to cry. He didn't want his mother to be sad that he gave away the coat. Heber's mother was not sad. She hugged Heber. ("The Coat," *Friend*, Mar 2012)

9. Exceptions

When and why are *kind* people unkind?

Some people are kind, polite, and sweet-spirited ... until you try to sit in their pews at church.

When people break our rules, church standards, or civil laws.

I would be kind if he were kindworthy, changed, or deserved it.

Blame game, enemies, unforgiven, etc.

³⁹ We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. (D&C 121:39)

I have a little authority as husband and father.

⁴¹ No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; ⁴² By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—⁴³ Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; ⁴⁴ That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death. (D&C 121:41–44)

10. Kindness and Children

*To improve human relations,
treat people like humans, not relations.*

It is easy to be kind to our children when they are cheerful, respectful, and obedient. But it is difficult when they disrespect us or disobey our “little authority.” They should obey us! Many parents of teenagers can relate to the following story.

Jewish Counselor and the War in Heaven

One day a woman called ... for some counseling. Their problem was a rebellious teenager and an escalating power struggle between her and her parents that was getting out of hand. ... [This] is a common ... issue for family therapists. ... I suggested that they [go my Jewish colleague who was closer]. After only a couple of weeks, I got a call from my friend. “Carl, I need some help. ... If they don’t [loosen up the parental iron fist], this kid is about to run away from home or attempt suicide or do something else drastic. But ... every time I suggest ... loosening up, they patiently explain to me that I just don’t understand their religious obligation, as Mormon parents, to keep this kid in line. Frankly, I don’t know how to deal with this.” ...

“Here’s what you do. First, tell them ... you have developed a real curiosity about the Mormon religion. ... Then ... [ask about the] ‘war in heaven’ ...”

A few days later he called. “Carl, ... You wouldn’t believe the response. Even the rebellious teenage kid promised to give me a copy of some book ... with the family picture in the front. Then I said ... What was this war in heaven? Well, the mom ... launched into some story about a council in heaven and two plans and she gets about three minutes into it and she stops cold in her tracks and gives me a funny look and says, ‘All right, Doctor, you’ve made your point: From that moment on they were like putty in my hands. It was like magic. Carl, what is this war in heaven?’”

Of course, there was no magic. This good LDS woman simply had the unnerving experience of explaining Satan’s plan to an “investigator” and, in the midst of her explanation, recognizing it as substantially her own version of responsible Mormon parenting as she had outlined it to him the week before. She understood the gospel principle fully; she just had been blinded to its applicability to her everyday challenges as a parent. (Carlfred Broderick, *My Parents Married on a Dare*, 87–89)

Like these well-intentioned parents, I used compulsory means to be sure my first teenage son would “choose the right.” There would be no empty seats at our eternal family table! After several years of frustration, bad feelings, and rebellion, I read a story like this one. As I read, the Spirit helped me realize how I was implementing Satan’s plan in my family. My efforts to compel him to come unto Christ were actually driving him away from us, the Church, and Christ. After much soul searching and help from the spirit, I learned how to respect my son’s agency to choose for himself. I also learned to use the Lord’s methods of persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness, love unfeigned, and kindness (D&C 121:41–42). Since that time, I frequently say to myself, “I voted for agency” when I see people doing things I think are wrong. This calms my natural response so I can feel the promptings spirit.

Richard G. Scott: The inspiring influence of the Holy Spirit can be overcome or masked by strong emotions, such as anger, hate, passion, fear, or pride. When such influences are present, it is like trying to savor the delicate flavor of a grape while eating a jalapeño pepper. Both flavors are present, but one completely

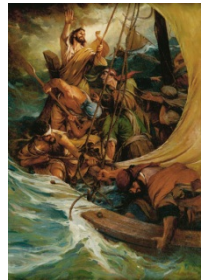
overpowers the other. In like manner, strong emotions overcome the delicate promptings of the Holy Spirit. (“To Acquire Spiritual Guidance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 8)

“Satan does not need to overpower us in order to win the war. He only needs to get us to adopt his way of fighting it.” (Warner)

It took time and practice to change my natural man habits of thinking and doing. When someone did not do what I thought was right, I said to myself: “I voted for agency.” I imagined Christlike responses to hearing about possible mistakes, crimes, or sins committed by one of my teenagers. When I slip up, I imagine what I wish I would have done and ask “what can I do now” to improve things.

Let go: For 4 years, some parents were doing everything possible to fix their two teenage sons who were doing drugs. They had tried various restrictions and punishments. They sent one to a 15 month rehab program. The father was concerned for his sons and frustrated that nothing was working. One day at the temple he saw a picture of Christ in a storm tossed boat.

“Each of the disciples is in various forms of panic. One disciple is clenching tightly to a rope that is tied to the sail. He has his teeth gritted and is pulling with all his might. At the same time, the Savior is standing in the front of the boat very calmly with His hand outstretched. As I stood in the temple that morning, the eyes of my understanding were opened and I suddenly saw myself in this painting. I was grasping on to the rope (my sons) as tightly as I could. I somehow felt that if I was strong enough, or good enough, or held on tight enough, I could save my two sons, just as this disciple thought he could save the boat. The Savior on the other hand didn’t need to use any physical strength at all; without holding tightly to anything, spoke the words ‘peace be still’ and the elements obeyed. As I stood in the temple ... the Spirit whispered to me ‘... let go of the rope and trust me.’ I soon realized that my sons have a Savior... and it isn’t me! I bought a copy of this painting and display it prominently in my home to remind me to let go and to trust the Savior.”



<http://www.walterranefineart.com/figures/single-gallery/9348434>
“Master the Tempest is Raging” by Walter Rane (LDS Collection)

11. There are no mistakes, only learning opportunities.

*Good judgment comes from experience, and
experience comes from bad judgment.*

Every adversity, every failure, every heartache carries with it the seed on an equal or greater benefit. (Napoleon Hill)

²⁴ Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant. (D&C 90:24)

²⁷ If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; ... for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them. (Ether 12:27)

My weakness = I cannot fix or change my children or spouse, especially while using Satan’s methods.

The mistakes of each of these parents prepared them to receive and understand important spiritual lessons that have changed their lives. I learned more about the gospel and Christ’s love from my mistakes than from all the years of hearing and reading gospel lessons, talks, and books.

I always choose the right ... after exhausting every alternative.

When I realize I have made a mistake, I can blame and punish myself, or I can learn from my experience, trust in God, and become more Christlike.

Every football play starts where the ball is ... not where it could or should have been!

12. Two Ways of Viewing and Doing (MFS, BofM lesson 5)

See What Is	
1. Find fault	1. Accept (not condone or desire)
2. Blame	2. Goal focus (end)
3. Punish (if possible)	3. Method (means)
4. Justify (grievance story)	4. Do it! (learn, repeat, grateful)

How were these ways of viewing and doing illustrated?

- Get the plates of brass: Laman complained, Nephi: I will go
- Broken bow: Laman complained, Nephi solved the problem
- After Ishmael died, Laman wanted to kill Nephi for trying to rule over his older brothers. (1 Ne 16:37–38)
Birthright; Joseph in Egypt; Angel “the Lord hath chosen him to be a ruler over you” (1 Ne 3:29)
- Commandment to build a ship
- Laman tied up Nephi on ship
Nephi tied up on ship, looked to and praised God;
On ship, Laman threatened those who spoke for Nephi
- Summaries of journey to Bountiful (1 Ne 17)

Both Nephi and Laman were on the same path to the land of promise. Nephi was happy and grateful; Laman was unhappy and ungrateful. Why? (faith story vs. grievance story)

If I am following the “manner” or “plan of happiness” that leads to joy, why am I so unhappy?

Two choices when I don’t like something:

I can change my viewing or doing!

Laman Blame Game, or the Nephi Change Game.

Nephi:¹ We did travel and wade through much *affliction* in the wilderness; and our women did bear children in the wilderness.² And so *great were the blessings* of the Lord upon us, that while we did live upon *raw meat* in the wilderness, our women did give plenty of suck for their children, and were *strong*...; and they began to bear their journeyings *without murmurings*.³ ... And if ... men keep the commandments of God *he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he has commanded them; wherefore, he did provide means for us while we did sojourn in the wilderness*....⁶ We were exceedingly rejoiced when we came to the seashore; and we called the place Bountiful....

Laman:²⁰ Our father, led away by the foolish imaginations of his heart ... hath led us out of ... *Jerusalem*, and we have *wandered* in the wilderness for these many years; and our women have toiled, being big with child; and they have borne children in the wilderness and *suffered* all things, save it were death; and it would have been better that they had died before they came out of Jerusalem than to have suffered these *afflictions*.²¹ ... These many years we have suffered in the wilderness, which time we *might have enjoyed our possessions* and the land of our inheritance; yea, and *we might have been happy*.

13. A way that seems right but leads to death

There is a way that *seemeth right* unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of *death*. (Prov 16:25; 14:12)

What seems right will kill you! Throwing water on a chemical fire may seem right but the explosion it causes can kill you.

Trying hard to get out of quicksand seems right, but your efforts cause you to sink faster. When lost in the wilderness, it may seem right to save your water ... until you die of dehydration.

The *Blame Game* seems like the right way to change other people. Therefore, we continue using these methods even though they make things worse and lead to the death of the relationship.

A young man asked his girlfriend to call every night when she got off work late. When she forgot to call him one night, the *Blame Game* began. The next morning he “chewed her out” for not calling. Within a few weeks they were no longer dating. What seemed right led to the death of the relationship.

“A man dragged his wife into a stake president’s office, thrust her in a chair, and said, ‘President, tell my wife to obey my priesthood. Then all our problems at home will be solved.’ The president opened ... [to D&C 121:36–37], looked into the man’s eyes, and said quietly, ‘According to what I read here, you have no priesthood.’” (Covey) What seemed right to this man was leading to the death of the marriage.

Wife covenanted to obey me! Ignores Eve context (as obey God).

The methods used by the parents of the teenage girl seemed right but were destroying the relationship and driving her away.

Ways That Seem Right But Usually Don’t Work

- Do my will! (You should...)
- Do my will or else! (You must...)
- Do my will because I am smarter, wiser, better, or more righteous than you!
- Do my will cheerfully, willingly, and without being asked!
- Your will be done, not mine. (Lose-Win)

Preaching, nagging, ...

Coach or teach: Lou Holtz, Scout leader with David

Until I learn a better way, I will do what seems right.

Repeated failures and heartaches may soften my heart and open my mind so I am ready to let the Spirit help me learn a better way.

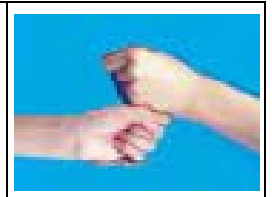
About the time I had two teenage sons and had been a frustrated assistant scoutmaster for a few years, I learned and acted on the idea that “there are no mistakes, only learning opportunities.” This changed how I treated my sons, my family, my scouts, my students, and my employees. I began to help them learn from their experiences instead of complaining and punishing their mistakes, or trying to prevent mistakes. Same goal, new method.

14. Kindness and Spouses

Love is blind ... but marriage is a real eye opener!

“The only thing more universal than a woman’s desire to change her man is a man’s resistance to it.” (Marriage)

The only thing more universal than a father’s desire to change his child is the child’s resistance to it.



I am unhappy because my spouse does not do what I expect. If my spouse would change, I would be happy. The *Blame Game* seems like the right way to change my spouse.

The unkind methods we use to change others backfire! (Fists)

Judge my good intentions, not my results. (I use compulsory means for your own good. Who cares if it is not working?)

²³ If ye shall come unto me, or shall desire to come unto me, and rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee—²⁴ Go ... and first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I will receive you. (3 Ne 12:23–24)

15. How love begins and ends (Marriage)

How Love Begins	
Focus: What I like	Attraction
View: "Rose-colored"	Appreciation
Do: Please and honor other	Affection (time, touch, talk) Ask

Habituation	
Focus: What is different	Less Attraction
View: Take each other for granted	Less Appreciation
Do: Normal	Less Affection

Expectations (Rules)	
Focus: What I dislike (find fault)	Disappointment
View: Blame and Pride Games	Depreciation
Do: Displease and dishonor other	Disaffection, Demand

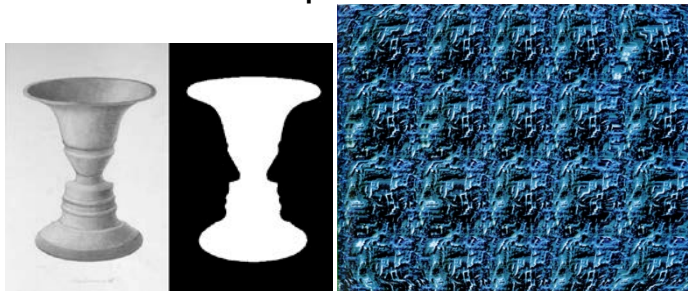
Samson killed 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass.
Everyday 10,000,000 relationships are destroyed with the same weapon.

How Love Ends	
Worthless	Last Straw
Hopeless (Impossible to change.)	Rewrite history
Helpless (I can't change it.)	"Divorce"

16. Top Ten Dishonoring Acts in a Home (Marriage)

- Ignoring or degrading another person's opinions, advice, or beliefs (especially criticizing another person's faith).
- Burying oneself in the television or newspaper when another person is trying to communicate with us.
- Creating jokes about another person's weak areas or shortcomings. (Sarcasm or cutting jokes act like powerful emotional word pictures and do lasting harm in a relationship.)
- Making regular verbal attacks on loved ones: criticizing harshly, being judgmental, delivering uncaring lectures.
- Treating in-laws or other relatives as unimportant in one's planning and communication.
- Ignoring or simply not expressing appreciation for kind deeds done for us.
- Distasteful habits that are practiced in front of the family—even after we are asked to stop.
- Over committing ourselves to other projects or people so that everything outside the home seems more important than those inside the home.
- Power struggles that leave one person feeling that he or she is a child or is being harshly dominated.
- Unwillingness to admit that we are wrong or ask forgiveness.

17. What can one see in pictures like these?



Years ago, I saw a picture (left) that can be seen as either a vase or two faces looking at each other. Later, I saw a 3D image (right) of the same thing. If one looks at a larger version of this

3D-image and focuses the eyes in front of the image, 3D faces will appear. If one focuses behind the image, 3D vases appear.

Although a 3D picture doesn't change, where you *focus* your eyes determines what you *see*. Some ... see a strange pattern ... others see a 3D image. What you *see* determines how you *feel* and how you respond. Some people *love* these pictures because they can see a 3D image. Others *hate* them because they have tried many times but have not been able to see a 3D image. (RCC 1)

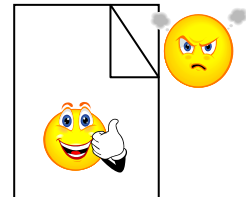
18. I can change my Viewing or my Doing. (Marriage)

If I do as I have always done, I will get what I have always got.

In unpleasant situations, it is easy to respond to like Laman (a natural man). It takes much practice, to respond like Nephi and to catch myself if I do not.

I make our bed with one corner turned down as a reminder that we can look at what was done (bed made) and be grateful or at what was not done (corner) and be unhappy.

- If I look for what I like or do not like, I will find it.
- I can murmur about problems like Laman or seek solutions like Nephi.
- I can be grateful like Nephi or ungrateful like Laman.
- When I catch myself responding like Laman, I can practice changing my viewing and doing to be like Nephi.
- Looking back on an unpleasant time, I can review and relive a grateful survival story like Nephi, or I can review and relive an ungrateful grievance story like Laman.



Flat tire: If I have a flat tire, I can fix it (repent) and be on my way, OR I can sit at the side of the road having a pity party or blaming myself instead of fixing it. Once it is fixed, it is useful to learn from the experience to avoid similar future experiences. But it is of NO value to waste time in self-pity or self-blame.

Spilled milk: One day my young son disobeyed me and spilled the milk on the floor. I said in a loud, angry voice: 'If you every do that again, you will be grounded for the rest of your life! Now get a rag and clean up your mess!' His mother said he was just a little boy, but mercy was not going to rob justice. As I drove to work, I was still upset. If he continued on the path he was on, he would end up like Laman! Half way to work, the spirit said, 'You have never taught him how to pour.' ... Like the 3D picture, the events of the morning did not change, but I now saw things differently. My feelings changed immediately from anger to happy because I knew I could teach him and I began making plans to do it that night.

Losing games: If a sports team loses on weekend, many at church discuss who was to blame (ref, coach, players) and what should be done to those responsible

Self-Blame: Although most prefer to blame others when bad things happen, some blame themselves: 'It is all my fault. If I had been a better parent or leader this would not have happened.' They then proceed to punish themselves with endless guilt trips and pity parties instead of making the best of the situation like Nephi.

Repentance or Penance: In the scriptures, repentance means returning to God by keeping covenants and changing self to be more Christlike. During the great apostasy, repentance came to mean *penance* or self-punishment. Even today, many beat up on themselves for things done many years after changing.

Conclusion

Prayer circles help us learn how unkind feelings relate to our prayers, not just in the temple, but also at home and within our circles of influence.

Read G A Smith Quote

What methods do I use to get my family to do what is right? Would these methods invite and entice non-members to come unto Christ and be baptized?

Everyone will be glad to see you, but will it be when you come or go?

You just have to love: When our oldest son was 16, he told us he was gay. This was a difficult time for Elona and me. One day Elona told a friend that she would give one of her kidneys to save any of her children except her oldest rebellious gay son. In a talk, she shared her experience after hanging up. “New words came into my mind, ‘In the last days the hearts of the mothers will turn cold.’ I fell to my knees in tears of anguish and cried aloud, ‘Heavenly Father, I can’t be the fulfillment of that prophecy’! Please help me! Have I actually allowed myself to become a “cold-hearted” mother?’ ... As I wept those bitter tears, I was finally ready for the Lord to teach me. At last I had come to him with a broken heart and a contrite spirit — with ears to hear and eyes to see. Words came quickly to my mind, ‘You are not a cold-hearted mother. ... You are just hurt. But think how much more your son is hurting. You have friends and family and loved ones to support you. He has no one to turn to. He has been rejected by his family, by his church, by everyone he has known all his life.’ ... A deep sadness came over me, only this time the sadness was for him. My heart was totally changed, and I asked, ‘Heavenly Father, what can I do? I don’t understand anything about homosexuality! How can I be a good mother for this child?’ Very clearly the spirit said to me, ‘You do not have to understand. You just have to love.’ My sadness quickly changed to excitement. ‘Well, I can do that! I can love!’ I had loved a lot of troubled kids over the years. ... I knew I could love. And so with that precious gift from the Lord, I began to love my son.

(Elona K. Shelley, “My Journey from Fear and Pain to Hope and Joy,” www.sviewp.com)

Read part of Hinckley Quote

Kindness is love in action. May we love and be kind especially to our wives, children, and grandchildren.

Quotes

George Albert Smith: I pray that the love of the gospel of our Lord will burn in our souls and enrich our lives, that it will cause husbands to be kinder to wives, and wives to be kinder to husbands, parents to children, and children to parents because of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is a gospel of love and kindness.

Gordon B. Hinckley: Let us return to our homes with resolution in our hearts to do a little better than we have done in the past. We can all be a little kinder, a little more generous, a little more thoughtful of one another. We can be a little more tolerant and friendly to those not of our faith, going out of our way to show our respect for them. We cannot afford to be arrogant or self-righteous. It is our obligation to reach out in helpfulness not only to our own but to all others as well. ... Let husbands and wives cultivate a spirit of absolute loyalty one to another. Let us not take one another for granted, but let us constantly work to nurture a spirit of love and respect for each other. We must guard against faultfinding, anger, and disrespect one for another. (“Thanks to the Lord for His Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 1999)

Sources:

- GAS = George Albert Smith, see chapter in lesson manual
- MFS = Monte F. Shelley, Gospel Doctrine lessons, www.sviewp.com
- Marriage = Monte F. Shelley, “Marriage Lessons I Learned and Am Learning,” <http://www.sviewp.com/Supp-Talks.htm>
- Covey = Stephen R. Covey and Truman G. Madsen, *Marriage & Family: Gospel Insights*, 54.
- Warner = C. Terry Warner, *Honest, Simple, Solid, True*, BYU Devotional 1-16-96