





LEADERS | AND | LEARNING

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I would like
you to reflect with
me for a few
moments on leaders
and on learning.
I have spent the last
15 years of my
life thinking about
and working
on the education
of leaders at
two very different
universities.

My years at Harvard were full of opportunities to observe and study remarkable leaders and the role of the university in their development. However, I want to focus on my experience at Brigham Young University–Idaho and what we are doing there to realize our mission. I hope to share with you something of the excitement that is on the campus. But I also hope what I say may be useful to you as you reflect on your own opportunities and responsibilities to lead and to learn.

LEADERSHIP WITH A SMALL L

At BYU–Idaho we have a wonderful mission that can be summarized in two words: “disciple” and “leader.” This mission is to help our students become disciples of the Savior and leaders in their families, in the Church, and in the world. The leadership we have in mind is leadership with a small *l*. It is leadership that serves and inspires with vision, courage, and faith. It is leadership by ordinary people acting in an extraordinary way. It is the kind of leadership we need at every level of every kind of organization in society.

It is our great blessing, and the great blessing of our students, to live in a world where being a disciple-leader demands the very best of us. Indeed, I believe our students will need to be stronger, more faithful, better educated, and better prepared than ever before if they are to accomplish everything the Lord has for them to do. If we are to realize BYU–Idaho’s mission, we must be far more effective in the way we educate and prepare disciple-leaders.

We live in a remarkable era. It is a wondrous time in the kingdom, when temples dot the land and the Church is spreading across the earth. The power of faith is evident all around us. But this is also a time of profound change in technologies, in social and political institutions, in international relationships, in the character of important industries, and in whole countries. It is a time of turmoil, turbulence, and uncertainty. It is also a time of great opportunity. And because of all this, people across the land have recognized and discussed at length the need for effective leaders.

I believe the great emphasis we see on leadership today reflects the commotion around us. Effective leaders set direction in times of uncertainty and challenge. They



align people with that direction and motivate and inspire others to innovate. Leaders take effective action and do new things in times of change. In fact, the rate and pace of change and the degree of difficulty organizations and communities face today have few precedents in all of human history. This situation is not going to slow down or get easier. In this time of turmoil, commotion, and rapid change, we feel a need for more and better leaders. And we feel the need for them everywhere.

We need mothers and fathers to be stronger, more effective disciple-leaders in their families. We need more effective disciple-leaders in the Young Men and the Young Women organizations, in priesthood quorums and the Relief Society, and in ward missionary efforts all across the world. We need more effective leaders in schools and hospitals, in companies, and in communities of all kinds.

The Lord has called his followers to be exactly the disciple-leaders we need. In the Sermon on the Mount, He proclaimed:

*Ye are the light of the world. . . .
Let your light so shine . . . that they may see
your good works, and glorify your Father which is in
heaven.¹*

Later, to the Twelve, He said:

Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.²

In its deepest meaning, this message is a call for us to fill our lives with the light of the gospel. But that is not all. It is a call to action in the world. We cannot let our light shine unless we are engaged in work that connects us to our Father’s children wherever they are in this world.

These words are also a call to truth, to live our lives according to true principles. I believe that the light within us shines through true principles in action. This is a call to bring true principles to bear on the work we do. It is a call to minister, to love and lift, to strengthen and develop, to guide and teach those we serve with the Savior as the great Exemplar.

Though this call to leadership in light and truth will take us into the world, it is not about earning the honors of men or the praise

of the world. It is a call to bring light where there is darkness; to bring faith where there is cynicism and doubt; to bring peace where there is turmoil; to bring beauty where there is blight; to bring honest labor where there is waste and laziness; to bring hope where there is despair; to teach and lift up; to bring order; and to seek after everything that is beautiful, lovely, and of good report.

If we heed this call to be disciple-leaders, we will bring the strength and power that comes from the application of true principles to every organization and every community in which we take part. Indeed, I believe leadership based on true principles will be the only effective leadership in the turbulent, challenging world ahead. I believe this is especially true in our families.

I want to illustrate the importance of leadership based on truth with five characteristics of effective leaders. The principles of leadership I will discuss apply to any organization, but I want to specifically emphasize their power in the family because that is where all of us will accomplish our most important leading. There are many characteristics that could be discussed, but I have chosen to highlight five I think are particularly salient now and will be in the years ahead. As I review these five characteristics, remember that we are talking about leaders who are disciples of the Savior with testimonies of the gospel deep in their hearts, who keep their covenants, and who are directed by the Holy Ghost.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERS

The first characteristic is integrity. With all the uncertainty and turbulence in the world, we need leaders with integrity. These are leaders with strong values who put those values into action by taking personal responsibility for everything they do.

- In your family, you cannot set direction for your children without integrity. For example, if you teach your children the importance of the temple but do not attend the temple yourselves, your children will get the message that the temple is not important.

The second characteristic is energy. I believe we need leaders who energize others and who make everyone around them better. They cre-

ate energy, not by administrating but by ministering. These leaders care about other people by recognizing the value in them and by creating opportunities for them to grow.

- Leading through love in our families is the Savior's way. Your children know you love them because you tell them, hug them, serve them, set limits for them, and sacrifice for them, and because you teach them to work and give them responsibility. No matter what they do, you never let them get outside the circle of love.

The third characteristic is inspiration. Effective leaders in the years ahead will inspire trust and confidence in those around them. This will come in part from their integrity and in part from the guidance of the Spirit, but it will also come from their knowledge, competence, and skill. Inspired leaders will create meaning in the organizations they serve by sharing a vision of what is possible and by clearly establishing the larger purpose of the work.

- In your family, you have a charge to lead by inspiration. For example, you could lead by connecting the chores of daily family life to the larger purpose of the family, if you act under inspiration. You could perhaps draw a connection between taking out the garbage and creating an eternal family, and your children will believe you because they trust you and have confidence in you and because they can tell that you have the Spirit with you.

The fourth characteristic is wisdom. Leaders need to be teachers. They must have the ability to see beyond the horizon and help others understand how to get there. They need to deeply understand and put into practice the true principles that underlie success in the work and teach those principles every way they can. They need to be great communicators and teach in word and deed—especially deed.

- In your family, you need to teach your children about the plan of salvation, the Savior and His Atonement, eternal families, and living the gospel every day. There is a way to life and salvation, joy, and happiness; and you know the way. You need to teach and communicate and lead your family on that journey.

Finally, I come to the characteristic of courage. Leadership, even leadership with a small *l*, requires courage. Leaders need to do hard things, to set high standards, and to uphold them. They must make tough decisions, be unpopular, and do the right thing even though the wrong thing may sometimes seem easier.

- Children thrive on structure, discipline, and hard work. You lead by holding your children to high standards, even if those standards are unpopular.

LEARNING AND TEACHING AT BYU-IDAHO

These five characteristics have important implications for the education of disciple-leaders at BYU-Idaho. If we are to realize our mission, especially in light of the tremendous challenges in the world ahead, our classrooms and everything associated with them must be places where our students:

- Grow in obedience and spirituality and in their faith in Christ.
- Acquire substantive knowledge, competence, and skill.
- Learn to take personal responsibility for their actions.
- Learn to minister to, serve, lift, and strengthen others.
- Learn to create meaning for others.
- Learn to teach.
- Learn to communicate.
- Learn to set high standards and meet them.

This means that the central activities of the university—learning and teaching—must be more effective, deeper, and more powerful than ever before. In addition to the subjects that normally engage university students such as math, English, science, history, languages, literature, music, and so forth, the processes of teaching and learning at BYU-Idaho must also address the spiritual and personal growth of our students as disciple-leaders.

In September 2001, President Henry B. Eyring spoke at BYU-Idaho and outlined the effects such an approach to teaching and learning would have on generations of BYU-Idaho students. This is what he said:

The students will learn from example how to keep on a steady upward course in times of great

TO ILLUSTRATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PEER INSTRUCTION, BYU-IDAHO PRESIDENT KIM B. CLARK CONDUCTED AN EXPERIMENT WITH A GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS. HE HAD EACH OF THEM SILENTLY PONDER A PHYSICS QUESTION WITH MULTIPLE ANSWER CHOICES AND CHOOSE THE CORRECT SOLUTION. A VOTE WAS THEN TAKEN TO SEE WHAT EACH PARTICIPANT HAD CHOSEN. AFTER THE VOTE, HE HAD THEM BREAK INTO SMALL GROUPS WITH A CHARGE TO CONVINCE ONE ANOTHER OF THE CORRECT ANSWER.

PRESIDENT CLARK THEN RETESTED THE STUDENTS AND FOUND THAT MOST OF THEM HAD SWITCHED THEIR ANSWER FROM THEIR ORIGINAL RESPONSE TO THE CORRECT ANSWER, SUGGESTING THAT PEER INSTRUCTION HAS A POWERFUL EFFECT ON LEARNING. OF THIS, PRESIDENT CLARK TAUGHT: "WHEN YOU TEACH, YOU WILL LEARN MORE THAN IN ALMOST ANY OTHER ACTIVITY YOU WILL EVER ENGAGE IN. AND WHEN YOU LEARN FROM PEERS, YOU LEARN TO DO SOMETHING THAT WILL BE INCREDIBLY VALUABLE THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE."

change. They will see leaders and teachers and staff members for whom the Savior and His kingdom are at the center of their lives. From that example, I make a prophecy. Now listen carefully.

From that example they—you—will become lifelong teachers in their families, in the Church, and in their work, and they will bless others wherever they go by what they have learned about innovating with scarce resources and treating all they have as if it were the Lord's.

You can imagine the joy of an employer or a Church leader when such a graduate arrives. The graduates will be at personal peace by having kept the commandments. They will be natural leaders who know how to teach and how to learn. They will have the power to innovate and improve without requiring more of what money can buy. Those graduates of BYU-Idaho will become—and this is a prophecy that I am prepared to make and make solemnly—those graduates of BYU-Idaho will become legendary for their capacity to build the people around them and to add value wherever they serve.³

In order to substantially improve the effectiveness and power of teaching and learning at BYU-Idaho, we have introduced a number of initiatives in learning and teaching over the last two years. I want to talk about two: (1) the BYU-Idaho Learning Model and (2) Peer Instruction.

THE BYU-IDAHO LEARNING MODEL

The BYU-Idaho Learning Model creates an overarching framework of principles and processes for learning and teaching across the whole university. Our intent is to create a framework that students and faculty will learn and put into practice. It should be a living framework that grows and develops as we gain experience and deepen our understanding of the learning process.

Five fundamental principles define the BYU-Idaho Learning Model. As I share them, please note there is nothing here that we have invented. These are principles drawn from the revelations of the Restoration. They are true principles that apply anywhere Heavenly Father's children seek to teach and to learn. Here are the principles:

Learners and teachers at BYU-Idaho:

- Exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as a principle of action and power.

- Understand that all true teaching is done by and with the Holy Ghost.
- Lay hold on the word of God—as found in the scriptures and the words of the prophets—in all disciplines.
- Act for themselves and take responsibility for learning and teaching.
- Love, serve, and teach one another.

We put these principles into practice in three steps:

- **Step 1: PREPARE** personally and in small groups before class.
- **Step 2: TEACH ONE ANOTHER** through discussion, by presenting ideas, by sharing results of experiments, by teaching a segment of the class, and in many other ways.
- **Step 3: PONDER and PROVE** by reflecting, discussing, keeping a learning journal, participating in assessment, and getting ready for *Step 1*.

This simple framework of principles and processes has several implications for faculty and students. In applying this process, everyone learns by study and also by faith. Students have opportunities to act, to prepare, to speak, to participate, and to teach (in which they authorize the Holy Ghost to teach them). Faculty become the designers of learning experiences rather than dispensers of knowledge. Both students and faculty prepare to learn and to teach for every class. There is a focus on active learning and experiential learning using many different pedagogies and methods. This means that students are engaged in the learning process. They teach one another and take responsibility for their preparation and their learning. And there is much more work in teams, both before and after class.

We have built Web sites to assist students and faculty in learning about and applying the Learning Model. These Web sites will be public and open to anyone.

PEER INSTRUCTION

One of the approaches we have developed to implement the Learning Model is Peer Instruction. Peer Instruction is a set of methods or practices where faculty design learning



experiences in which students teach and are taught by each other. Here are a few examples:

- *Peer interaction:* Immersion and formative assessment using study groups and peer comparison.
- *Peer response:* Deepening and integrating learning through case studies, paired teaching, and concept tests.
- *Peer collaboration:* Joint problem solving and concept application through team projects and group assignments in class.
- *Peer feedback:* Expanded evaluation through peer review.
- *Peer-facilitated instruction:* Student-led instruction and student-directed lesson development.

Our experience with Peer Instruction suggests that students who have recently learned a difficult concept are often in a better position to teach the concept to someone who does not understand it than those with much longer experience. We know that students learn more when they teach something to someone else. Thus, peer instruction not only helps students deepen their conceptual understanding, but it also helps them develop lifelong learning skills. They learn how to teach

peers and colleagues, and they learn how to learn from peers and colleagues.

I believe the Learning Model and the other initiatives we have launched will have profound consequences for the development of our students as disciple-leaders. These initiatives address the development of the critical skills and characteristics that leaders need, and they will help our students learn how to learn.

“Small *l*” leaders will need to learn throughout their lives. With greater faith in Jesus Christ, they will need to be *increasingly* knowledgeable and skilled; and they will need to *grow* in personal spiritual power. Small *l* leaders will need to take *increased* responsibility to love, serve, and strengthen others and to teach and communicate more effectively.

Herein lies the power of a university-wide approach to teaching and learning based on true principles. Our students will be immersed in the Learning Model. It will not be in just one class; it will be in every class. They will not only experience it in every class, but they will become proficient at applying it in their lives. They will learn by faith and be taught by the Holy Ghost. Our students will learn to take action and exercise faith to prepare, to teach one another, and to ponder and prove. BYU–Idaho students will be better educated in all the dimensions that matter to disciple-leaders. And that capacity to teach and to learn will remain with them all of their lives.

There is a little saying that captures the power in the Learning Model. The saying is: How we teach is what we teach. There are three corollaries that describe what happens to BYU–Idaho students:

- (1) Teach to learn; (2) learn to teach; and (3) learn to learn.

The principles of the Learning Model are not limited in their application to the university. They are based on true principles that apply to our families, to the Church, and to our work. In the same way, the principles of leadership are universal in their application. I hope that each of us will take to heart the Lord’s call to be disciple-leaders and use these principles of leadership and learning in our families. In doing so we will accomplish the great work that lies before us.

My dear brothers and sisters, we live in a great time. This is a time of revelation. The Lord is moving with great power in His kingdom and in the world. Many new things will be revealed that have never been revealed before. We all need to learn how to teach and to learn so that we can help each other grow in our capacity to serve in every part of our lives. In section 100 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord said, “I will raise up unto myself a pure people.”⁴ And He will. He will build His kingdom, Zion will be established, and the Lord will come. I pray we will be ready to either meet Him when He comes or to come with Him. I leave my witness and my love with you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

- 1 Matthew 5:14, 16.
- 2 Matthew 20:26–28.
- 3 Henry B. Eyring, “A Steady, Upward Course,” BYU–Idaho devotional, September 18, 2001.
- 4 D&C 100:16.

ART CREDITS

Page 27: Max Thalmann, *Last Supper*, ca. 1920, woodcut print, 14 ¼ x 11 ½ inches. Brigham Young University Museum of Art. Page 28: Max Thalmann, *The Resurrected Christ*, ca. 1920, woodcut print, 14 7/16 x 11 ½ inches. Brigham Young University Museum of Art. Page 31: Max Thalmann, *On the Cross*, ca. 1920, woodcut print, 14 7/16 x 11 ½ inches. Brigham Young University Museum of Art.