

# LEADING SAINTS

## How Connection Can Improve Your Wards Mental Health | An Interview with Geoff Steurer

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Everyone I want to let you know about an upcoming virtual conference that you gotta check out in an effort to bring more thoughtful dialog to the topic of mental health in the latter day. Saint context the leading saints team has put together the mentally healthy saints virtual summit we have interviewed twenty plus individuals with cheese or real life experience related to so many mental health topics including anxiety depression eating disorders. Adhd and even scrupulously we will discuss all these topics as they relate to the latter day saint faith experience and how we can all come together to better minister to those who struggle with mental health. It's free to attend. Virtually he kind of join us for more details on the topics that we will cover during the summit and register for free text the word lead to four seven four seven four seven or visit leading saints dot org slash mental health again. Text the word lead to four seven. Four seven four seven or visit leading saints dot org slash mental health. When is the sun valley ward in las vegas. Nevada love ladies. It prepares me as they should have difficult conversations with members of our award. It's not me what are some of the problems and struggles at the members can be having and is providing resources and information to better support the members in our war. This is the leading saints. Podcast i in your host. Kurt franken i will be back now if you're new to leading saints. It's important that you know that we are a nonprofit organization with the mission dedicated to helping latter-day saints be better prepared to lead and we do that through content creation. Craciun gration christian. And that the like this podcast. We have thousands of articles leading saints dot org. We do virtual events we do live events. We just try and do it. All cover all the areas of content. In order to help latter-day saints be better prepared to lead now. This interview is part of our mentally healthy saints virtual summit where we do a deep dive into the concept of mental health and from the leadership perspective. How can we be better mentors and better ministers to individuals who are struggling with mental health. What can we know. Maybe should we stop knowing in order to help individuals better of find a place in the church and in this gospel so for all the details about the mentally healthy saints virtual summit and go to leading saints dot org slash mental health.

And there. you'll see all the details. It's free to attend and watch online. We have some exceptional presenters and speakers. Twenty plus. in fact of incredible presenters. Who's gonna give some great information about the mental health and in the latter day saint world and so we wanted to feature one of those interviews on the podcast and this interview is with jeff. Stryker and many of you are familiar with jeff. We've had him on the podcast before he'll do a little intro of in our interview but the simplest thing he's a therapist and he's really good at what he does and he does a great job in this interview talking about the concept of connection of community of attachment and why that important to an individual's mental health. I want you to pay attention to few items. On in this conversation he talks about his far. Is what we can do to stimulate community in connection of individuals in this concept of co-regulation and self regulation and men. Just some powerful nuggets there. And i hope you'll appreciate this as a leader and it helps. You may be think as you're meeting with that individual who's really struggling thinking. How can we stimulate the culture connection in the this the life of this individual drawing upon the ward the corm the relief site whatever it is and In our our churches and such an awesome place to do just that. So let's get to it. Here's my interview with jeff stryker. A welcome back. Another session of the mentally healthy saints virtual summit and we'll get to welcome back a regular when it comes to virtual summits or the podcast things. That's jeff stryker. How are you jeff. Rape her thanks for having me back. Yeah you know if this was a sitcom you're like the neighbor that always pops in maybe five or six episodes so people aren't from the you and your background what you do. Maybe just give us a quick background and put yourself into context. Yeah you bet. I'm a licensed marriage and family therapist and been doing this for over twenty years and my specialty is in working with couples especially couples that are dealing with some major betrayal generally like sexual betrayal affairs things like that and so i do a lot of work. Helping couples move out of the crisis of betrayal and build a solid relationship. I have a podcast called from crisis connection my co authored. A lot of their things of book with mark chamberlain called love. You hate the four. I build online courses like the trust building boot camp and just do a lot of writing for the magazine at written a relation.

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Calm offer them for years in just trying. Just answer questions. Spread lots of good information offer support if people but currently. I'm just in private practice. In saint george utah and doing a lot of podcasting course creation online stuff. So and i love hanging out with kurt. Love and building claritin supporting their awesome. Will i always love what i learned from you. And it's always inspiring and it is really applicable. That's what about your style. And and i would imagine today will go the same so when i approached you about this mental health virtual summit. I mean there's more of a general thing than the past interviews. We've done may be more about the trail and struggles with pornography and whatnot. Where did your mind go as far as topics that you could speak on and then we finally concluded the speak about attachment unhealthy attachment and so forth. Maybe how'd you get there and wise attachments. Such a crucial thing to consider when we were talking about mental health. Yeah so i mean first of all. I wanna stay inside my lane right. I wanna stay inside the scope of my own practice and saw when it comes to mental health. I mean. I'm not an expert on schizophrenia or mental illness or

things. Like i'm not an expert on a lot of those specific psychological struggles people. How myself is more relational. That's what i worked with. Mostly just couples in relationships but what the research comes back to all the time over and over again is regardless of what kind of mental health struggle. You're having your relationships are being one of the biggest predictors in your wellbeing and i've just seen it with my own family with my own life amac. Sally members struggle with mental health issues. I've struggled with all kinds of stressors and challenge the my life as well in it comes back to my connections in terms of helping you know. Forget how much. I'm going to thrive for my loved ones. You're going to thrive. And so. I really wanted to bring this in and talk about all. The things can't change we can do something about connections are relationships and how to manage data sets huge predictive wellbeing. Yeah and that's the thing. Is you know especially nowadays. I i don't know maybe it's just my perspective but it seems like there's been more and more research about connection the importance of community these types of things and on paper like it makes sense. Of course we all need friends. We all need good relationships sometimes. The application of a difficult especially in the context of abia church leaders Dealing with somebody who's really having some mental health struggles and they wanna sort of stimulate that connection and do you think you got your ministering brothers or sisters and you know just talk with them or go. Find a friend in its. It's easier said than done right. That's right yes easy to say like we'll talk to some of us that's That's like telling somebody to build a rocket go into space match. Start with something like that. There's a lot of pieces than vulnerable will definitely get into that. But it's something we all probably instinctively probably sense like. That's probably a good idea but how to give here. There's it's hard for people so let's leave foundation here. Where do we begin to start understanding attachment in relationships connection those types of things. Yeah so the place. The place i would start is just sort of making space for the this whole sort of privileged or giving room for or attachment as a as a thing in general. I think this last year the cove year year twenty twenty. I think more than any other time in history probably probably gave the world if you will a deep sense of isolation really looks and feels like and pete was on. Everybody's mind we were all talking about it. Obviously routines your changed at people's jobs are affected. People were are dying. There were a lot of really serious things going on but everybody regardless of what was going on from experience some form disconnection from not only the routines but especially the relationships. I just talked to a friend the other day he said. I finally got to help my mom after one year and he just talked about how awful that was to not be able to hug his own mom because they were worried about her health and in yesterday in fact i was. I went to church for the first time for the two hour block. Our word finally opened up and masks and we were trying to do the best we could but it just felt a mazy all the time gripe in the past about three surgeon even gripe about to our church. I was so thrilled to be with my people for for both hours yesterday. Just all so good. So i think just recognizing and i think again. We're all doing that more now than ever recognizing that this thing really matters that a connection and attachment really matters to me. That's where i want to start because we are really defenseless alone. And but but we're getting a lot of confusing messages.

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We live in a culture that seems to prize individuality at the expense of community. And all that goes deeper in a little bit. But where I want to start is. Let's not get into this either/or with connection or individuality recognizing that they're both sides of the same coin. But I'm afraid that obviously because of COVID also because we live in a culture that prizes individuality we probably gone too far that direction in terms of our psychology and a lot of the things we talk about in terms of just leaving the healthiest people out. There don't need other people and somehow doing it wrong. If we feel you know insecure lonely. You know needy. A lot of people. Don't ever want to feel needy. Like I don't need other people I'll be fine. But the truth is that we were built to live in community rebuilt best our whole wiring designed to thriving community thriving connection. Let me ask you about individuality. Make sure we understand that. So yeah so. What are some examples of maybe where we thought. Individuality was sort of the best mover or maybe sort of the pitfall. We stepped into or thought. Yeah this is supposed to be my own person or an maybe put more context. Yeah and again I. I can't emphasize enough. We don't want to get into polarized thinking around this that that one is better than the other. They both matter and they both are essential for our psychological wellbeing and to thrive. I'll give you a quick example. The maybe put this into context. There's an author. Her name is Ruth Whitman. She she. She said she had moved from Britain to the US. Lonely and had friends. She's new to the country and so she downloaded an app on her phone. Happiness app and she goes. You know they're all these options. If there is this one could do. Where would message her every hour with some kind of a positive affirmation that she was supposed to repeat herself over and over things like I'm beautiful on the no and she said the problem. Was that every time her phone buzz with an incoming message. She said she described it. As a Pavlovian sort of jolted excitement thinking actual person was trying to affect her and so she said that she was sort of realized the bitter truth that she couldn't shake that feeling that she was looking for community looking for connection so so she talks about. She talked about this thing. I read from her though so interesting. She says that a lot of the individually messages that we've sort of digested and absorbed over glass. Who knows I mean she. She talks about being Soling crept up on century. Century-maker deathly accelerated sixties seventies. These these ideas like happiness is determined. Not by what's happening around you but what's happening inside of you. Happiness should not depend on other people. Happiness is an inside job in this whole journey assaults discovery acting like we're in some kind of a vacuum in or not affected either other people. It's just this whole salt actualization idea and again at the expense of community at the expense of connection but we know from research that are real. Happiness really depends to large degree. What are the quality of connections quality of our relationship. So if I'm sitting here alone trying to make myself feel better just with mantras and individual things that will take me so far. It'll be all be thinking about the falling connections. I'll be but you know you could almost balance out perfectly and get a deeper connection. I feel good about myself. But through the connections with other people as a mirror. It's very interwoven. Web that really district happiness and and so yeah so just try to generate. That allowing really has its limitations. Yeah that that makes more sense. And I think sometimes in the context of church leaders encouraging somebody working with somebody. It's often done you know. Maybe these appointments are happening in a bishop's office you one to one which is fine but then it's like maybe some of the solutions are scripture. Study pray which are good. I don't want to diminish those the power of scripture study or prayer. But it's like if we're going just

into a room by ourselves study the scriptures depraved. Obviously god's there it or interacting with god on some level but still it's a if that's our only goto solution we were missing this community aspect of a you know who's your friends in the ward or in your life or what do you do on weekends or just getting an idea of where they're receiving that sense of community and there's a lot of power in that right yes absolutely. Yeah and and i think about you know the story of adam and eve from the very beginning. He created out of then. I believe you know. This is my own personal belief. That i as a as just a way to sort of emphasize our need for connection.

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He staggered it right. He didn't just put a bowl year. I think there's this thing it's not good for man to be along so good for women to be alone. We are hardwired from the creator to be bothers to kanat and we just do better connected. In fact i mean that was the very first thing that satan did to them when they became mortal. Isn't he trying to split that. You tried to separate them. From god from each other and that whole hide you know conceal. Get away split apart. That's the that's the exact opposite of how our builds power wiring then. Of course we know that gonna call him back out to end then surrounded unbelievable more people like i mean that's just angels in support and and that is that is really the the plan the plan is. It's it's a group kind of thing even though individuals absolutely matter if we're gonna really help people's mental health we have to think in terms of relationships and attachments not just trying to fix the individual. It's a big part of why When i was deciding what i wanted studying i knew i wanted to be some kind of therapist. And that really studying the different disciplines sort of instinctively this whole idea of marriage and family therapy systems. Everything's interconnected what you know. Social work and others also emphasize but for me it really spoke to me specifically about the interconnectedness of of relationships. And and howard just deeply affected by by everything going on an in and around us with other people. Think about like you even just like him. You know things that that just move us so deeply. You talked about our individual relationship with god. Even though we aren't physically touching connected with god and in the kind of the human element there's this very deep spiritual connection you know. I think of description isaiah which is calling in how firm a foundation one of my favorite lines in his fear. Not i am with the. Ob not dismayed. I need the every hour class. You know in the arms of his lung we we have these images. These hands that really talk about an action at attachment as ways to call for a work. It were were alone when we feel lonely. My arm is reached out to those kinds of things are just still comforting to us. Because that's in our spiritual physical dna. This temple is whole regulate with another person to regulate our bodies our motions in our spirits in tandem with other people. Yes yes so powerful. So i'm curious like And i'm not jumping to align the too far ahead in your outline you know when you have an individual that comes in and obviously they're struggling whether it's depression anxiety just life in general and maybe you ask them about their community about their connections attachments. And they don't really have any i don't you know. Maybe they're single or or their marriages sort of disconnected. That's not readily available there as far as that healthy connection. Is there any like a worker or assignment or effort that you encourage them to do in order to create that. And what does that even look like other than will go find a friend or i mean what does that. Look like yeah. That's a great question.

It's interesting like there's a tendency sometimes to when somebody feels lonely to sort of send them away acting like if they're coming telling you they're lonely and we sort of send them away she go find somebody missing the point because we're right there with them and they're they're in relation right there and sometimes i think we have this fear that if somebody expresses that loneliness that whatever that we're going to have to be their new best friend forever and never have a life on because we do. We don't really understand the power of attachment in the power of the moment. People do so well just being witnessed people do so well in the person right in front of them is taking in their experience in recognizing that that they're not alone in this moment they're being seen by me so yeah. The therapist people are paying money. I'm not gonna go home with them or hang out with them on the weekends but in that moment they can have a corrective experience. Give them whole and even a healing experience that someone is right there with them and it's not just my job like i'm he connect human the human with them and so for administering brother sister or maybe someone you know that you're gonna roll with them or maybe you're not their natural environment in your home. You can offer that connection and trust it that you genuinely have this heartfelt cared concern and interest in their experience right. In that moment you are now forming attachment with them here using the power of the relationship to help them a lot of times. We feel like a lot to do. We're looking around all over the place trying to figure out how to help this person but we've got an attachment right here that we can leverage that has a lot of power has a lot of strength and we.

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We sort of missed the obvious. And i have to remember that even in my i've had time i feel like my treatment. My work with somebody may be his connecting. Well it's not landing. Maybe it's not exactly what they want or rather what what i feel like is helping them at. I can't tell you how many times people have liked just stopped me thankfully said things like what you're doing is helping me because i you just hear with care not thinking like what technique or you know my slow speed and it's the relationship like we're and we know we know for the research and therapy that seventy five eighty percent. This is for mike lambert from byu his research. Some eighty percent of what actually affects change in therapy. Is the connection between the therapist. Client very little about technique in summed up. So we're you know we're really leveraging something really powerful to be in a private secure trusting opportunity here was somebody which you know a lot of get our natural environment and i do believe to some degree not entirely that more people would would. He'll outside of kelsey environment in their natural environment. If we all could really just create more focused nurturing attention and just really. And i thought minimized might feel their what we do. And i think that even people who have good relations still need benefit from calcium. We offer obviously a lot there. But there's a lot of people that really just need to know somebody season. Here's some takes him seriously and we can offer that to people grown children. Our neighbors our friends all day long. And it's very protective. Yeah that's really helpful and it makes me think of like Those instances i remember as bishop. Obviously that connection was really really helpful being in the office together talking it through letting them know like your like this offices veiled you as much as you need it. But then i also felt like kind of go maybe two extreme-right thought like i as the bishop was sort of

my job to be their mentor. Their their connection relationship with them like a. You can text me anytime and call me up days or but then it kind of became the. I never gave out connection outside of that relationship a chance. Either or encouraged it. I just sort of felt like well. This is supposed to stay between you. And i and so let's work through it and i remember you know appointment after appointment getting to a point where i was like. Why isn't this. Nothing seems to be changing and got him in therapy and and going back. In hindsight i really feel like man. I wish i would have been more of a community stimulator for that individual like people in or you know utilizing the ehlers corner leaves citing more those types of things but what about talk about that percent. Because i was. I was talking about leveraging the power of that moment i read a lot of the times. You can't be as the bishop or as a therapist. We can't be there for them more than you know. Sometimes these structure. So i mean i believe everybody. Everybody comes from padova network for some kind of a place for. There's some relationship. I mean even it even people that we don't make it to adulthood. We don't make this far without somebody carrying us. You know because if somebody truly abandoned and alone whatever we don't survive it's very difficult so while ties. People believe that they have no one there for them. But that's just not true. There are people that karen even if even if they can't think of anybody directly network who they can call on. There's a strong chance that there's people that you might all who. Who are the kind of person who could care who could be a part of her life. Even if it's as elder maxwell talked about an assignment which is really another way of describing organized love in his words and and so yes. I think we have to get very creative. And the thing is that were so were so cautious in vulnerable when we feel like somebody is insincere with us. We feel like we're project in so we tend to push it away but if somebody really does care if you really do want to enlist or engage somebody they're going to have to understand that there will be some initial resistance where there might be some skepticism but state with it and you know you care. Conference talks about this. You don't think that the most famous one that i love is the one that creasing leader goes into the ocean after that kid who serving you remember that on your in his church clothes right church suit because it didn't shelf the church and and he goes out there in the kids out there surfing on sunday. the church. they. Wade's on the ocean. And it was at that point. That kids said that he realized this guy is serious. A really cared about. And and so i think that there's there's just a lot to be said about just presence about just consistency.

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And there's lots of places where we can find. Relations to church has has an incredible built-in system of charac concern for each other in ministry in callings assignments. So somebody's single doesn't have doesn't have any family. They're they're really truly isolated. Cut off their family. Hopefully there can be things done on. The level of brash level to create some healthy relationships healthy attachments to inviting include into to really care about people feeling included on. It just makes such a huge difference. Yeah yeah i agree in anything else. Any other thoughts around this idea of organized love or project attachment where it's like you and that sort of what ministering can feel like sometimes like i'm supposed to let you into my house and you're supposed to ask me questions about my life and even though i don't like it. I think it's just what we're supposed to do. But anything else like is to consider when trying to stimulate that

that attachment or community in a church setting. Yes and again. I think he's just just recognizing that the church you know. God organized the church to be like this. I found a quote from elder marlin k jensen. This is what he says. He says the church builds meeting houses not hermitage's from the beginning of the restoration. The command has been trusted gathering communities where we can learn to live in harmony and usually support one another by honoring our baptism has the inspired organization of the church provides settings where we can develop socially in church callings meetings classes cora's council's activities and a variety of other opportunities for association. We develop the attributes and social skills. That helped prepare for the social ornamental exist in heaven. And and so i think that if we act like ministry is the only place where we can build relationships. Were missing the point. I think about yesterday church. We have a fantastic family in our ward friends of ours who have tablets needless standard. They're all telling their two years old easily doublets and so these kids are. They're busy interactive. And so you know were members are jumping in and sit on the edges trying to trap children in community. A sense of. You're not alone. We've got your back you care about you know assignment That she's happening because we all showed up at the same place together in so the church building a place that just draws us into one place off the same time like i felt yesterday where all back together finally just felt like right. We're all here. We can see each other's needs happening last night we were at timothy and just a walkabout which is just gathering in the coldest street. Everybody's just talking outside in their cookies and it was just really casual and we're standing around my wife and i with a Some other couples. There's one woman was a widow and she lost her husband years ago. She standing right there and all the couples were telling stories about how they met and my wife one of the most where people that i know she just turns to this woman and says tell me how you rock met love to hear your story and so she's including this woman who probably hasn't had a chance to talk about her husband and how they met in a long time and so the church again. This was not some ministering. This was some formal thing but it's organized love by. It's were all just showing up to things and nurturing taking care of each other and being aware and that's her baptism covenant and the structure of the church is perfectly designed for that evening classes in my life. He says heltzel meetings activities callings. And so i just would say you know if you've got a mentor member. Who feels lonely. You know i never felt so media and bald in so connected as when i was a calling. That needed me like that. So whether i was serving with back in the day the scouts those days primary chorister and things like that. There's just places where we needed in the ward in all those things really affect the attachment on the security of the all feel recurring principal standing up to me throughout this. You know whether you are a bishop in an office meeting one person. Who's who's struggling or your word activity or your church like this overwhelming. Need of just being present in that moment right. It's not like the tactic is yes every widow about their husband and how they met like no that that person s that question because they were incredibly present at that moment and just being and sometimes we have a tendency of maybe over structuring some of these activities. We do you know and when in reality it's like you know we just need some chilly in the corner and some cables in then we'll handle the rest with the stimulating community. that way. yeah. I love that and i i think sometimes and this is again.

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This is more of a cultural commentary. I think sometimes because we're so involved in each other's lives as members of the church in we. We have these markers like missions or things like that. A lot of times of our conversation can border on lazy. And you know we'll we'll ask somebody things like you know we're just commissioner are what you call inner. We'll ask these questions. That sort of give us like some basic information about somebody that a lot of the times. We don't take it further than that and just really get to know people and talk about them. We put people in categories. They're calling her their activity level or things like that. I think we can do so much to see people and to just talk with them about their life and about what's going on around him instead of just the regular church sort of conversation. We often get stuck in admiral. Quick like blood times like the community building the connections lot of time in the nuances of of our church structure or activities. Not where you know. We're we're now getting that age. Jeff where we say well. The church used to do this thing. And so we're we're that have just recently when we've gotten rid of that. The priesthood opening exercises the official name. Right there was just like this before that third hour where all the men were together ends like. There's always two or three guys that have you know. They shared the the dad. Joe can everybody sort of chuckles and then you know. The youth are standing up and maybe sharing a scripture whatnot. Like on paper. I can sue. I made the church on simplify this sort of get to our church. you know. we don't have so many minutes to deal with but dissimulate some of that nuance like community and conversation. Where yet maybe another score you do need to get to that conference talk you know. And maybe add. The teacher has prepared for a week in great to make sure that he has enough time. But to maybe be okay and be present at moment as you talk about. You know the game that was on last night or you know what house. Everybody's bracket doing in march. Or you know these things that really bring the humanness out and simulate a lot of connection absolutely like when you know in the scripture talks about the gathered to talk discussed the world thurber souls. I think that to me is such an expansive phrase that obviously includes just the day to day. I love that coin. Kurt like and and again i understand. The church has reasons for why we structure things but we have to be careful not to become so efficient in how minister things that we missed. The human connection with people are looking for. I go to church to worship. But i also go to church for community connection and for me to act like. I don't need all those other people. I'm lying to myself. I don't know what i thought about it before code but since coded going back yesterday i was just looking around. Why man you know. I do need these. People are all the shares of the real quick about you know how we over overcomplicate this in terms of building. I appreciate what you're saying. As far as you know my story about my wife asking this this woman this question about her husband you know you can't you can't automate this you can't. It's very contextual. It's really about showing up and being president noticing what people need there is an author of parker j palmer who said that the human soul doesn't want to be advised or fixed or save is simply wants to be witnessed to be seen heard and companion exactly as it is when we make that kind deep. Bow to the soul of a suffering person are respect reinforces. The souls healing process only resource. That can help to suffer. Make it through. And i love that idea. I love that idea that when we can just make de deep battle the soul of another person just by witnessing carrying noticing being present. Not even saying something. It's like it activates. The body's natural resources to

heal. If we can trust that a lot of people are gonna feel better said. I'm just trying to screw around and try and act like we have to do something to make people feel better to connect it's built-in just being with another person's very powerful. Yeah yeah so. I wanna make sure there's been great discussion. I wanna make sure haven't taken down too many rabbit holes anything. We've missed as far as principal point to lay the foundation of this or to really understand this concept of community in attachment. Yeah let me just back up and give a quick. Reader's digest does anybody know the reader's digest as anymore talk another jam or age. I descend that second a quick summary of tach science just real quick because if we understand this is something that we're born with we may not try and find it so much because every one of us is born and again we go to pre mortem stuff. But i'll just start with birth on the earth here is that we all have inborn in lifelong needs to be seen hell recognized.

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Touched comforted by others in any form of isolation is traumatizing at any age. I mean it's it's the thing they do to prisoners to punish them worse than prison. They put them in solitary confinement. Isolation is the most punishing thing we can do to human being. It's you know and so the attachment system john bali. He's a you know. A research from the forties fifties on attachment. He found that the one essential question our attachment system that rewired with from birth is asking. All the time is my attachment figure are they. Nearby are the accessible or the attentive and we are physiologically asking this question from birth before our brains in our mouths can even catch up to her and babies just knowing you stick them on the chest of the parrot hold tight. They calm down all the way to the cradle to grave. An older person who's on their last leg. They still thrive in benefit tremendously in community with touch being seeing. We don't outgrow it. And anytime that we feel disconnected we start making attempts to try and regain connection and that can be through asking directly which is vulnerable and difficult or do in counterfeit ways through trying to turn to like an addiction. Like turn on neth. Let's just feel like we've at least got something or an addiction to drugs or alcohol pornography. you're spending money. Were always doing something to sort of co regulate physical and emotional. Sol's we're wired to coagulate. We can self-regulate to a certain. But we really don't do very well or don't do it for very long and until we really start to break down and so at some point we're going to require some sort of regulation from a human being. A substance are some activities. Something that's gonna help us. You see this all the time in public you know. People are waiting in line at the bank or the grocery store. You know we just stand there still like people start to pull out their phone so they just talk to somebody or we just need some kind of column response back in for so i wanna give that context basically just A the people that we love are the most powerful hidden regulators of our bodies our motions. A call and response to feedback loop the to Like that regardless of our age or emotional development will need some kind of regulation from others. You think of that. That movie was called castaway with tom. Hanks he's tropical island and he makes friends with the volleyball who's completely inanimate. But but he builds a relationship with it where he can get the call and response and even argues than fight them in pubs him out of the cave and goes and finds and they make up and i mean. It's just the human draw an automobile euchre. But i remember. I watched that. That didn't seem weird to me.

Bottom started to begin sure tropic. Probably want to talk to something to so. That's just like out. yeah yeah. It's so nate for us. So it says in the bible when we're born who says it's not good for man to be alone so we know that so we were put in you know we have mother and father who take care of us as babies Regulate our bodies our emotions. We feel secure. But then there's this commandment to leave other father and cleave and that new person or our partner or spouse becomes our new primary attachment and for the rest of our you in this partnership were kind of cool regulating with this other person needing to figure out who i am as an individual who. They are as an individual how we impact in effect each other. Because we're both needing. This security insecure bonn so much relational thriving and struggling is really trying to get that balance right and then for people who aren't in a primary attachment relationship like that right. They're not really at home with mom and dad but they're not in a primary and with another adult sometimes that can feel really tricky about will co regulate with. Who do i connect with. How do i get that secure attachment and it's just sort of the work that you have to do is to find community. Find connections find friends find meaningful relationships that really give you that chance to be seen to connected to be nurtured and that's just the work of a lifetime. That's what we're all here to do is to learn how to live in zion. Learning community. learn how to be there for others and to let others be there for us and just because you're married doesn't automatically mean that you have a good bonder good connection yet to work at it. You have to learn how to show up context context of you know as far as co regulating for self-regulating that yeah we as a species we we can't just rely on self those there's a million tactics you could try and i'm sure no therapist become very good at may.

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Be walking people through those those tactics of self-regulation but it's just interesting about our nature that we need this code regulation and even look at the institution of marriage. Or it's like it's so difficult times. You see end in divorce and i think the statistics show the vast majority of people who go through a divorce. End up remarried again. You know you'd almost like try and reject the whole institution but we it right and this is where you make your living right. That people are coming in. It's more that you're helping them figure out a way to coagulate each other in a healthy healthy manner and then and the context like singles right and we learned in this recent general conference that the majority of the demographic of the majority demographic in the churches are those that are single whether they have been married before or not or. I love this context in the this concept in the context of like a a singles award or where individuals gain. We're not necessarily trying to help them. Find a match or a spouse. But how can we stimulate some co-regulation year. Is it through roommates. Or you know a through friends or you know. I think it just is more helpful to approach the problem from that concept rather than trying to get people married or whatever. Don yeah exactly. His marriage marriage is the solution. Marriage is definitely a goal in. Its internal principle. And it's you know. I think i have no doubt that you know god designed not as a way for us to feel really secure. But i'll tell you. There's a lot of people marriages that feel very lonely. So the thing about how to get people that are feeling lonely to start to co regulate with others is i mean. Just just imagine well just of like you know. If you're a single person listening to this reselling who's those lonely even if you go to public and

you just smile at another person and they smile back. There's an element of coregulation going on there. There's an element of like. There's a call and response. That feels really good. And that's just one very small example. There's also even if you're sitting by yourself in your apartment and feeling lonely and insecure and afraid let me share a few. This is from sue. Johnson who an attachment researcher creator emotion focussed couples therapy. But she found that even individually. You can do a lot to call on your attachments to co regulate you even if those people around and let me just read this year. It's an interesting exercise you can do. She says sitting quiet place takes deep breaths when you're ready see if you can pinpoint a moment when you design and the need for connection and comfort heat in the last few days so she says clay told me that she wakes up from bad dreams. And here's yourself say things like no one's here no one sees me. I'm invisible and she feels small. Okay so now see if you can find a person in your life from the president or the pass who creates a sense of safety and comfort in you even if we had traumatic past there is nearly always someone who reached for us or seem to care about. Our pain focused on seeing their face. They're looking right at. You held in like a child who tell them as simply as possible. What your anxiety feels like in your body and how lonely you feel with this fear. He'd been to a couple of sentences then listen to what they reply and try to take it in. We are bonding creatures. The wonderful thing about the human brain is that our nervous systems. Hold onto in store. He bonding among us. This means that you could actually use a sense of emotional connection from your past to sue your serve nervous system now in that powerful. Wow that is awesome. Yeah and so think about this. I remember when i was called as bishop. I had never felt more lonely than the day. After i got called the admission. They're high was shocked at how everybody all of the sudden treating me differently. How all the sudden everybody who were my friends acted kind of weird about me. Now that i was dish like who the bishop it just was a weird shift. A completely caught me off guard and i felt very lonely and my wife of course felt the same way. We both were just like what is happening. We just after was announced now sustained. I remember feeling so overwhelmed. And i remember praying one night within that first week and i had the impression just to sort of visualize this here but i was visualizing in my mind's eye heavenly parents ancestors people that i just names of people like No but i just was trying to imagine them. In my mind's eye just around me and i thought surrounded by the most beautiful love that i wasn't alone because i could count on anybody around me because everybody was acting weird. I was acting.

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We're we're all just kind of in this weird place but there was a lot of security just in those relationships that i couldn't talk but i could feel see access your actually and it was very regulatory just a really kind of gave my body and spirit a breath and it was really powerful in so what i read this sue johnson. I thought yeah. I've done that before. I was superpower whole. So yeah that's that's that's available to us anytime. And i appreciate just the simplicity of that type of activity in you know one thing i learned from psychologist kerry scarpa. She talks about. This is far as mindfulness. Meditation like going like one way that she starts out her. You know nightly prayers is. She'll mentally go to like a campfire and she'll sit at that campfire and just like watch know what we do at campfires watched sort of the flames and just of taken that moment and

then she imagined the severe coming in like sitting buyer. And they don't tie each is there. You know when you own the same thing with family members or loved ones. And i've gone through this exercise. I still use it at least weekly. I go through this. And it's just sometimes like i'm so overwhelmed with my day or you know there's so much me i don't i don't want to sit down and go through a laundry list of gratitude laundry list of you know requests of blessings and things. I just wanna be steel for owen just like be with the savior and not because we have some transactional conversation happening. But it's just that presence of love and and that you get from these bonds that have already been established or were. Stylish at one point is so powerful absolutely. I mean some of those beautiful are i've seen in the savior that resonates with me in a lot of people is him just holding us. We're sitting in an interview across modesto talking about our performance abyss achmet. It's so powerful like sue. Johnson says our system is designed to store those bonding moments whether they're spiritually of course but also from real relationships i mean i can think back to even a fifth grade teacher who cared about me. I remember that was real. I really fell like matter to her. With course by parents siblings and other relationships in moments. When i've argued with by and i feel lonely in my own marriage i can go back and recall times where i really felt connected to her and i hold onto that as an anchor to remember okay amount along and to get your matic about this by our body and our motions have incredible ability to store those bonnie moments we can also store painful ones and use that as evidence that nobody cares about us. And nobody's there for us. But tim's dishonest to act like those are the only ones there we have both and we can draw on the attachment ones as real evidence that can regulate our bodies and of course the courage in your encouraging those listening to god and create new ones and torture reengage reconnect. I'm amazed at how many times i've just called on my courage to reach out friend so they haven't talked to in years hand just thinking about you by a friend of mine from of roommate from. Byu back in the day. He's just trying to be a better friend. Good friend how you didn't talk years and it was just so beautiful powerful and it was like who cares that we haven't talked for her. She's good to be with you. Just lots of ways we can do this powerful yet. One thing that. I've been some other friends of talked about. Is we call them like the phone calls of of the nineties where you would just like call people right. You didn't texting and advanced hair. You available we're calling got a minute. It's like i just call you and is and you don't have any purpose other than eight like what's that like. What are you doing. And i'm just driving home from here. That and then it's just like the normal conversation. We used to have the nineties. As like we're we're now it's like. Oh well i'd already been stocking on facebook so i don't really need to call you because i that you're remodeling your living room and so i don't really need talk about that i've gotten update but there's it's removed the human connection of that relationship. It's interesting because our our life has changed. Yes so true. So i mean taking those risks in opening to other people is vulnerable. We don't know where it's gonna go. We don't there's there's a sphere that will be rejected but in my experience. The chances of that happening are very lower or probably pretty aware that. This person cares enough obama's to respond. We can create those experiences anytime you want. It's just our own fears in you. Know narratives get in the way. Yeah yeah so. Let me. If i can't let me share a couple of thoughts on Maybe some different categories that had really leverage attachment as as individuals in our families in our award But real quick. I just wanna before i do that. I just wanna say we. E we understand the power of human connection and improving.

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Our mental health are functioning. I think we would take that risk more. Often we would do more to privilege that and give it a space instead of trying to individuals solutions fixing the individual attachment increases our confidence it created decreases. Depression reduces anxiety. It makes us less aggressive. Were less susceptible to shock or stress or even physical pain for more flexible. more curious. We have more self awareness. We have more awareness. We problem solve better. I mean the list goes on and on and on the benefits of attachment. It's incredible and Okay so individuals Like you said owning to the social media thing you just talked about their kurt. Revolve temple will sort of live virtual land and bleed that we're connecting of course sherry triple said right. We're all alone together or not really feeling connected and so One commentator the difference between real life interaction and social media honcker stations to the difference between eating and alcohol or eating a bullet. Applejack cereal. You're starting and you have absolutely no source of any sustenance than the apple jacks. it's fine. it's better than nothing. But if you're sitting in an apple orchard in your eating apple. Jacks that's probably not the wisest course of action. It's a poor substitute for the original. So this is an opportunity to recognize. Most of us truth be told are sitting in the middle of an apple orchard now granted during when were all isolated and we were all stuck at home especially our older population in nursing homes. Social media was probably all new knew it could connect thankfully to somebody and it was fine. Got a lot of people through it. But here we are lifting life going back to normal thankfully and let's start eating apples. Let's connect with people. Let's get in front of each other. Let's have faced in face. We are the only ones that are probably in our own ways. Office like there really. Aren't that many barriers anymore to do this. So take the risks to connect with others. Everybody is feeling just as insecure. And maybe along as you might be. And nobody's sorta has the corner on this length. There's not just a a group of people out there who are just like so confident that they don't worry at all about their own attachments like we're all worried about whether refit in her daughter. How you know it's just a human condition so for individuals to strengthen yourself yes you can call on pass attachments. You can do those. Mindfulness has exercises. I just talked about but let's put down the apple jackson. Go out and start eating real apples in connecting with people. It's powerful before i move onto families. Kurt anything you want to save that or comment on her out. Well i'm just. I'm ciccio serial lover. I'm sort of offended right now. The good comparison. Forgive you. i forgive me but It is this I found my own life. Just this this routine or this effort of connection attachment like this this homework currently living in. We've only been here like six six weeks in so especially during time. Were you know we've just experienced a pandemic isolated a lot of people. My wife and i have decided to be proactive in our effort of connecting with our new neighbours and our award members and went on strike thursday night. We've been having ice cream night and it's so interesting because it's sort of annoying like going up to. I'm like i really want people coming over tonight now knowledge. We really keep doing this. But it's interesting every time they come like i love it like absolutely they by the time they leave or like. I'm so glad we do this. Those are such great people and learn some things and it's amazing just sort of this relationship is humans we have with connections that we need it so bad but sometimes it's just hard to get ourselves to do it but absolute links. Yeah i think that the inspiration to to build awards together

geographically instead choosing where you go is to me as is just so so divine only because if we were left to ourselves we would judge and select and create the smallest little tribe of people that made us feel good and and it would leave people out but now we get to be with a group of people that we wouldn't necessarily choose but then we discover and find that there's a lot more commonality and there's it just builds a bigger more beautiful community. I just think that we are in the church. We are placed in a context where we have access to all kinds of opportunities. Like you said is starting up ice cream social. I mean it just. It's built in. So i love that. Thank you so. I wanna make sure we don't miss the the main points here. So this is as far as the these tactics baby stimulating connection. Or how did you. This is this is yeah. Thank you so for individuals thinking about yourself just as an individual.

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What can i do to start to create an en- nourish and build more attachment and take advantage of this correlation. That's available to me. And so the way yet so just a review the way again. The the apple. Jack's apple thing. That's basically like just happened courage to just go get the real thing. Social media's great Fantastic but there are real people right united cremating living room hanging out taking that risk. And if you need to if you're by yourself in a loan and you feel nobody's even just to get a little bit of a rescue breath if you will. We can use that. Meditative described all on past attachments. To feel like. We're not totally alone. I don't both of those and they all really help so couple of places to start in our families. Let's talk about how to build stronger tapped in our families again. All of this is about improving on mental health as parents. Our children are a mix of dependency. They need us but also trying to be independent and we need to nurture from both of those in our kids and we want to create ultimately interdependent environment. So that when they're adults they know how to be themselves and be their best selves but they also know how to rely on and offer support to other people and the way we knew that you know against simplistically as we just teach them that will be responsive to him will be there for them will be engaged with them so royal feel safe and predictable but we also honor entrusted figured out yesterday. My almost twenty year old son who's moved out is got a flat tire and he called me just to talk through it and i wasn't in a position run on help him but just call in talking through with data. I was responsive. i talked about it. Somebody else's able to come help but we figured out but even adult who's on his own living his own life there is still that sense of likely somewhat aloneness. There was nothing. I could do to help him with physically with that tired. But there's something about knowing that you're not having interested do this alone other times. Here's other people might have to do these totally along and be independent absolutely and he could but if we can be responsive to our kids and not just pushing away and act like they should just do things on their. They'll learn to trust their own judgement to learn to trust others and they'll learn how to be more independent and also dependent. We want that else happen. It's like kids are playing sports. They're out there doing their thing independently. They're still looking back to see if you're watching. That's just however bill we need to know. Someone's there for us even doing our own thing. I appreciate what you're saying. Is that to recognize that. Maybe each child or each individual in the family may need that in different ways rather in sometimes we specialize parents. We started getting this mode like it's my job to establish

fairness and you know jimmy doesn't get that so billy you gotta be okay with or whatever makes me think of this every morning my six year old son as when he wakes up comes into our bedroom and wants to snuggle with mom. Well mom is breastfeeding our youngest child right now. And so that's usually when she's breastfeeding him. And it's like and here's dad over there like hey i'm game if you wanna snuggle with me for a minute but is like no like this will not do and so. It's just a sort of this dance that we have to get in like okay like i recognize that. Maybe i can't fulfill that need for you right now will will work it out absolutely yeah. There's always balanced of independence independence back and forth but if kids grow up in an environment. Where that kind of responsiveness. Even though it's messing they still threaten. Yes still thrive. We actually don't thrive when we're rejected. Isolated ignored that kind of stuff. So air on the side of connection err on the side. I'm trying to figure it out and people do pretty well and just show up. Just show up over and over and over again. If you don't know what to do show up by had loved ones that have that. I've tried to support him. Be there for dealing with depression. Anxiety addiction trauma. This stuff is part of the human condition and like Robert karen said he says in love. You don't need to be rich or smarter challenge. You just have to be there paying attention showing up over and over again trust. Stop in your families. I think a lot of the times. We have a tendency to be afraid that our kids will be to meteor too dependent to cleaning. And as long as there's a balance of independence independence will refine. that's again. Sometimes we lower kids view to independent or we long to independent and that sweet spot is really what you're going for. His apparent makes sense. Yeah and you know do as much as you can together as a family but also honor the times. Our kids want be alone by my sixteen year. Old is on his seventeenth birthday. He wanted to go on a solo backpacking trip for one night and just wants to have that time with himself in god just sort of feel like alone.

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Totally supportive who that i think. That's fantastic but he's carrying all of us within because he knows that we're also interested in houses for him so he's doing it from a platform of security and community and a lot of people know about it. They're gonna ask about it so whenever really just do things alone. We have people in our lives at care about us. So we need to hold onto that and also make sure we're offering that to each other and then let's talk about the church again. The churches built for this. And it's it's built as a community built like we talked to geographical boundaries of poland all kinds of personalities and people that we wouldn't necessarily pick our friends but it gives us a chance to rub shoulders with and even throw sparks with a different personalities and different types of people which is totally inspired. But again i think about all the places where we're put in opportunities to really regulating connect in canada's messiness presidencies right that can be really messy also. Really amazing. Friendships support mission companionship. Same thing ministry in assignments councils all those things. I think about elder holland and you know a few years ago when they renamed it from teaching administering really emphasize a higher holier way of doing it which simplified in a lot of ways the also made it much more human and gave everybody a chance to take a deep breath and say were owner complicatedness trying to make this to you know duty down instead of just seeing people as people and connecting with them through text message or through a phone call spending time

in person or just carrying. I love the fact that talking about it this way because to me. It's it's much more humanistic than than it's ever been. I think with ministry and it's like do something doesn't matter just to know we're on somebody's mind so regulates regulating it's comforting insecure and there's a thousand ways to do that in twenty twenty one knows somebody is on our mind and it's just built into the system and so i think that hopefully these. These three areas individually family church. These are just three areas. That i pick you can see. Maybe there are some ideas on on how to regulate how to connect how privilege attachment but at the core of it. I'll say this a thousand times. Do something just engage us. speak up. Reach just err on the side of closeness and we just tend to do better. Our mental health improves significantly. When we have that connection with other people. I appreciate this. This content of this concept in the context of of the church said throughout this this conversation. Just how awesome it is the way. The church is structured organized and often times we default as we define our ward or corm. Early side we often default to the word of organization this is an organization and that sort of primary like we were primarily an organization and a community secondarily but if we swapped those more of like will i. Let's approaches as a community. Then we'll organizing and get some things done and sort of this passive aggressive. You know tug of war between these two concepts but there is such we if we recognize it as a community so much good can get organized and get done that way absolutely. I love the reframed. They're that the community exists because organizational. Revision does formerly. Bring us together but rights in. You're right it's community in that way you know at the water's warm and it's been that way out of the they were putting community together to to go out him battle the world and figure things we can. We can handle anything in. This world has long not alone. I mean just so punishing difficult. But it doesn't have to be. Nobody has to be alone. Yeah awesome awesome. Jeff this has been a a great discussion. I don't know about me one more question for you. But what is there any point or concept that we haven't hit on that you want to make sure we hit on before wrap up or did we not i fear about repeating myself too much so i think that we've covered now. This is great. And i was going to say. If if there's anybody out there who's isn't quite sure of anything. What jeff said. Just go watch pixar inside out and you'll get an idea of how these these kinds of work by. That's why is the every therapist favorite pixar movies long again. One more question. But i what maybe reiterate where people can can connect with you. Find you your podcasts. All those things put yourself. Yeah easiest five years on my website. All my social media links around there might podcasts. All might all everything doing i. I just run through my website. And that's because my name is impossible to spell. You can just type in from crisis to connection dot com and you'll find me there so or you go to jeff stewart Again good luck with that.

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Thanks mom and dad or give the craziest new Find the i write a weekly call on a happy to respond year questions as well are finding on social media instagram facebook. So great will have left question. I have for. You is just considering in general this concept of connection attachment. What final encouragement would you give to leaders. If you're in a room full of the ships relief site presents els corn presidents. What encouragement what finally current. What would you give them an order to stimulate community an attachment in their own. Yeah that's

great. I think first of all just recognize in your own life comfort level with connection daughters. Because if you if you really struggled to connect to relate to others you're always trying to be alone and like you don't privilege or value that connection. It's gonna be hard for to suggest. That has the solution to people who really need it. And so you know a lot to become from families or come from backgrounds where maybe attachment didn't work out so well i struggle with relationships recognized that you are wire for connection. I am wired for connection. And if you're not sure what else do you not sure what else to recommend. Air on the side of trying to create more connection more community more co-regulation even the person sitting in front of you. Trust that and lean into people. Lean in trying. Create more closeness get thrive in feel more secure that way instead of trying to do it from a distance or just isolating people. I not responding or sleeping people along in their pain. You're in a unique position to offer and extend that type of security people just by carrying being present showing or involving other people to show up that person's life it makes the world of difference law. That concludes my interview with jeff stewart. So much appreciated that. I hope you did as well. You've got to hear more of these types of interviews during the mentally healthy saints virtual summit go to leading saints dot org slash mental health in order to see all the details and to watch for free. There's so much information so bring your notebooks and sign up for free for this virtual summit and you will not regret it it will definitely help you be a better leader. So go to leading saints dot org slash mental help and don't forget to register for free for the mentally healthy saints virtual summit by texting the word lead to four seven four seven four seven or visiting leading saints dot org slash mental health. It came as a result of a position of leadership which was imposed upon honest. I the god of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of jesus christ when the declaration was made concerning the own only true and living church on the face of the earth we were immediately put in a position of loneliness loneliness of leadership from which we cannot shrink nor run away and which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.