

# LEADING SAINTS

## Speak Up, Sister! Helping Women Be Heard

August 21, 2021

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Has latter day saint leaders we face very difficult conversations that put us at risk of saying the wrong thing that can do more harm than good. Many of these conversations relate to LGBTQ Latter day Saints. Have you had a fellow board member come out to you about their LGBT identity? Have you had LGBT neighbors and you just don't know what to say to them so you ignore them instead. Have you wrestled with balancing love for your fellow men while still respecting the doctrines of the restored gospel? In order to help leading saints is put together the LGBT saints library with more than 20 presentations featuring individuals who have a unique perspective or expertise around this topic. Three of the most popular sessions are available now to watch. Simply text the word lead to four 747 four 7 to start watching now or visit leading saints dot org slash LGBT. Welcome back to the leading saints podcast leading saints is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping Latter day Saints be better prepared to lead. And we do that through content creation much like this podcast we have articles at leading saints dot org you should check out a weekly newsletter you should subscribe to also has unique content. So let's jump into this week's episode. We're in saint George Utah with I'm going to get you mixed up. We have sisters here. So Jody strewer. Yes sir. And we've heard your husband on the podcast before. Jeff Stewart. He's been in any event I do. We always work Jeff in there some way. Yeah seems like it. Hey man just to be everyone. Yeah he's great. And Jamie Adams and you're both sisters. Yeah. Nice. And you're sisters that are starting a podcast or that have started a podcast? Yes. So who wants to jump in and tell us about your podcasts and it'll lead into a great discussion today? This is Jamie and yeah we started a podcast about say you're going over a year ago now. And during at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic we had been talking about it for a couple years before that going back and forth about well this is something that interests the two of us and seemed like when the world shut down for a little bit we had some time and so it became a priority. So for those of you who aren't as familiar or podcast is speak up sister and our website is speak up sister Nat and our audience is women and men who are searching for better more effective clear ways to speak up effectively in

homes church councils communities work anywhere you can name and to give some real strength to people who want to speak and be heard. Yeah now both of you being Latter day Saints I mean there's a latter day saint flavor to it but it's not necessarily all latter day saint focused right? No. No. That's just your personal experience and typically where you've needed to learn to speak up right? Yeah. So I mean podcast focused for women and men I guess but really to just help zoom in on this dynamic that happens especially in our faith tradition where typically there's an outnumbered gender right? And that's typically women. And that's what I hope to we can talk about today is just that dynamic of councils of meetings and this happens often where and I know there's a lot of milliliters out there that are striving to. Bring that balance into these meetings whether they try and invite more women in and even if correct me if I'm wrong but even if we had you know 6 women and 6 men those dynamics still exist where maybe you still fill out number right? Yeah they do. They do. We kind of we just come by that tradition honestly. It's in our history. It's in the culture and it's been becoming uncovered little by little for some time but it's our heritage that you know we've gone from being a piece of property to where we are now and there's still more work to be done and this is part of it. Women being able to just claim their space and an offer what they have to offer and trust that it belongs and that there's room for it. Yeah. So where we begin to even understand this dynamic of being outnumbered because typically we just default to counting the individuals in the room and saying oh yeah there should be more women in here but how do we begin to understand the dynamics of being outnumbered? That's a good and very deep question. You're right. It's not a matter of numbers always. Because our faith tradition and I would suggest that culturally the LDS Church cultural tradition you know in addition to the faith tradition is we're still a little bit behind even where the world is headed in terms of women their confidence in participating in a larger scale. Some of that a lot of it I would say has to do with a strong and very important belief that we have that women it's our heritage and role to invite and create space for children and families.

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We take that seriously and both Jody and I take that seriously. This wives as mothers as you know family protectors we want and desire that good you know to strengthen the nest as much as we can. But at the same time you know women are when they spend a lot of time in unstructured environments lots of interruption lots of noise then they're patterns and abilities to speak clearly to come to the point to contribute in what the world considers meaningful ways. The home life isn't always geared for that. And so when we when we then try to move over to a word counsel a simple thing that's run often like a board meeting then women are shifting shifting. They're having to go now to okay this is my you know I have to communicate differently if I've spent the bulk of my life in this one mode and then going a different direction. Which is kind of a nebulous way. I guess plenty of women and more and more are working and are outside the home now in our church than ever before in its history and there are a lot more women that are having opportunities and I think importantly as women of covenant and women of light to participate in a lot of those different ways. And so they were bringing a lot of new skills and they're bringing a lot of important. Contributions into that. But we're still we're still behind

and the women who do not have I guess what I'm trying to say is the women that women that don't have really clear ways of knowing how to shift easily so that so that they're speaking can be effective. Our feeling really frustrated. They're not because they're not contributing. And then they don't feel good because they're not contributing in their contributions are needed and necessary in fact the prophet himself has said that. Their contributions are needed and he's asking women to speak up but it's not happening the way it needs to. And what I'm hearing it speak that is that we often see this as a motivation problem. The priesthood leaders the milliliters would just you know get on board with including more women but in reality even if they did that even if they got equal numbers in the room maybe those women in our deep faith tradition of a lot of women are typically you know Monday through Friday or Saturday or 24 7 they're home with kids and focusing on mothering and nurturing in these things and then they shift to the boardroom setting and it's not that there's anything wrong with them or wrong with their lifestyle or why they're doing that but they just have to have the skill set may be that it is out of practice that maybe others in the room do have. A good way to look at I mean is it a skill set dynamic that we personally and there are assumptions right? Their assumptions and boardrooms there's a time limit. We're here. This is what we're here to accomplish. Many people fall into that very easily but sometimes our traditional modes of communication aren't necessarily naturally honed for that. We don't. It won't even get into this later but we don't have high levels of clarity in our communication. We don't have high levels of logic and succinctness as women we tend to communicate more broadly we can't tend to tell stories. So those things aren't you know to make that shift it can be a challenge. And when women start feeling insecure or frustrated or a little bit of emotional overwhelm in the meeting then all of a sudden it starts coming out and in all kinds of ways and then they're misunderstandings or they're feeling unheard or they're feeling talked over. There's just been the meeting can deteriorate in the woman's mind and you know the leader may have no idea that she's had a frustrating issue. And she's almost like stepping back from the engagement of that meeting and the leader in the room maybe the bishop thing so she just doesn't have anything else to say. We'll move on. When in reality she's thinking I'm checked out of this meeting right? Yeah. Jordy anything else that comes to mind as far as that dynamic as far as what women are experiencing there? I love what Jamie said and she said it beautifully but I do want to say that I think that what needs to be addressed is more than just the building of a skill. That I do think that's important and it's something that we try to cover regularly on the podcast we try to offer tools and get into really concrete things that women can do but because it is a cultural problem and because the culture is broken in this way then it's not just a matter of women needing to build skill. It's in a broader sense a matter of men and women needing to be able to work together better. And a lot of that will include men who administer in the church doing things differently. Yes inviting more women to participate in a meeting is a great first step.

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But then inviting women to speak during the meeting. Maybe even sending out notes ahead of time to give women a chance to think ahead about things and come prepared. There are just so many things that can be done when we address it from the point of view of men and women can

both do things to elevate this meeting so that all contributions are being made and then the spirit will be more free to flow. And so maybe let's go down some of those as far as what we can do. Like just even these this idea of sending out information beforehand. And again we're going to warn everybody is we make sweeping generalizations of you know there may be women listening like what is she talking about or what is he talking about that? Sure in my experience but I think just through the different research and content you've put together you sort of identified some of these points where can really be helpful for leaders to process and even this conversation sort of a microcosm of what we're talking about where you know just creating space it's good to just sort of create that space for the processing to happen in each individual mind in their own way rather than just plowing through and moving on to the next thing on the list right? So the first point I'm hearing is that there is maybe a what you talked on Jamie's there's this there's this skill set. And I hate using that word skill set like oh you know women are just they're not as skilled as men and they're walking into the room right? But naturally it may be because of the nature of our tradition of lifestyle as a latter day saint with the majority of couples having their the wife stay home with children the father going off to more of a board meeting where they are informal meetings. So naturally there's maybe more of a skill set developed there. So one could be okay the skill set but that's not the whole thing. The other thing is like you addressed Jody is that culturally we. There's some dynamics there like a patriarchal system where men hold priesthood they hold keys and in theory they have sort of that revelatory veto power right? Because they they're the holder of the keys. And is that sort of what the cultural dynamic? Is that what you're addressing this brokenness in the culture? Yeah yeah which is the leap that gets made from the men that hold the keys to the priesthood to perform certain ordinances that because of that that their voice is way more than the women in their councils which just absolutely isn't true because women may not hold keys but they have an absolutely equal access to the priesthood power. To serve in the callings that they hold. And so so yeah it is a matter of I don't know maybe just coming to a broader understanding of how it can work or just shifting entirely a focus on men and holders of the Preston and administration to a more collective way of approaching leadership meetings. Yeah. And really you mentioned assumptions. Like there's certain assumptions that are there whether we like it or not where everybody walks into a council meeting with the assumption of the state president is the last call on this or we're here to sort of figure out what the state president wants and just sort of heads and go along with like that assumption is not helpful in stimulating a wider discussion and being heard especially among women. Who are never in that seat. Of that key holder right? Yeah. Well you know I mean I don't this may be too much of a tangent. But I do recall the prophet saying in his first talk that he gave as the president of the church. He talked about the pattern that the 12 apostles and the first presidency hold to in their meetings is that they discuss and they discuss and they work things out and they contribute until all are agreed and the spirit is unleashed. And so in my mind that is the precedent. That's what we should seek for in all of our meetings. So so the idea shouldn't be that we attend a meeting and that guy has the last word. Right. Because if we're following this pattern that was laid out by the prophet then it doesn't work like that. We all just seek for the spirit in this particular circumstance. And so really pushing back on that assumption that people could have that assumption that that doesn't mean that or they've seen that happen for decades in the church right? So for sure. That's where the cultural breakdown is is when we walk in there with the assumption of we're just here to do what he

says right? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah go ahead. Can I just add something to that? There's a short video clip with Henry birns speaking about counsels in the church and he compares it because you know he's had some experience in Ivy League education and committees there and he compares the two of some of his work at Stanford University versus working in the church as a general authority. And he essentially says the exact same thing which Jody just mentioned. But then goes on to say gives us personal story of everybody talking everybody giving their input and even at the end of the meeting the leader of the meeting being the one to say I think this brother has not said something.

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And so he takes it on himself after that meeting to then pull the brother aside and say are you on board with this? Is there something that we're missing here what's going on? And he said yeah you know I am. I'm feeling unsettled about this or that. You know when we're when we're looking at it from the leader's perspective and maybe redefining like you just mentioned Kurt like our expectations going into that meeting. But additionally the leader's expectations for what his job is you know is it his job to sit there and you know bark the order or is it his job to be so aware of the contribution of every person in that room so that that spirit can be there so that that final unity and connection can be brought to the forefront of that particular council and that that's your respective gender. It's just who's in the room who's part of that? All of that needs to be considered. So so any other assumptions that maybe are out there you know one that there's one person that makes the call that's an assumption that's not helping. Assuming that we're all in the same skill set level of as far as having a council meeting or a discussion any other assumptions that often get looked over or just assumed for like I think that both men and women can bring an assumption to these meetings that because women don't hold the priesthood that what they have to say doesn't weigh as much. I think that's a very real thing. So different weight of opinions and things right? Yeah. Yeah. I don't know if I'm going to say this the way I'm thinking it in my head but sometimes there also is an assumption that if the communication manner or vessel is a little different than what we're used to that the message itself is therefore less valuable or less valid. That we all communicate the same as maybe the faults assumption there. Right. And if you don't then we're going to then the discounting automatically starts internally. And discounting meaning like discounting of that opinion. Even if we don't say it even if we don't say to the sister we kind of go oh it's just a brown. Right. Here she goes again right. Give me is there a hypothetical or maybe a real life example of what that may sound like or I don't know if this is directly does it but I hadn't experienced recently where I was speaking with a brother particularly about Colleen's I was giving some information saying here's you know a list of people and we need colleagues for this and listen and then the brother was then returning saying okay you know giving me information well you know this person has this calling or they're needed somewhere else they're not available which is fine but then at one point he said I don't want her she's difficult. And he said that about a couple different of the sisters but not of the brothers and you know when you're like Jody and I kind of have a hyper awareness of this type of essentially a tube. You should these problems. Oh shoot. You know is this kind of the way we talk about things or about people that we've stopped or lying on you know in spirit in this or

whatever and it was just because I'm very minor and small thing but it was an immediate discount because this woman happens to have a strong personality. You know and I think had she been a priest at holder it would have been transferred differently. Oh well he's he's strong and capable and we'd love to have him. Oh yeah yeah. So yeah that is exactly one of the gender assumptions that we bring which is that women are supposed to be mild mannered and easygoing and not have strong ideas or opinions and definitely not vocalize them in that way. That's reserved for men. That's a cultural assumption that we bring. Right and I think I mean I would class for myself for having a very strong personality and that's many times maybe been a planet or rewarded like others person like you know step sub takes control and moves forward but sometimes you know when women do that it can feel like wow sister right? Yeah right. Yeah. Get a label and that's the hardest part. She'll be labeled difficult aggressive forthright like and there's ways that we talk about that that aren't yet that's not flattering you know? Yeah even direct even women who are too direct. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah that they just kind of get pushed over on that side like it's not okay. But you've also mentioned in your podcast about this concept of sensitivity where a typical conversation may happen and it can feel like you know from maybe a male perspective like well this sister is awful sensitive. It's like almost don't like the sensitivity in this like I just want to deal with logic and facts and ABC but then she's bringing in the feelings. You know I don't know. You know what I mean? Yeah that's a great comment.

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And in terms of bringing skills to that meeting then that is definitely a skill that could be developed on the male side is an ability to be able to listen to and make room for and accommodate somebody who has an emotional way of speaking or a meandering way of speaking that those kinds of things are perfectly they're very different. They're not as direct they're not as male you know in general terms. But again like Jaime said it doesn't discount the content. Right. And what's an example of that like this talking about the emotional way of talking or a meandering sort of I get that the sense that you know someone just sort of needs to go on a journey with you through their words before. Exactly right. Where sometimes just like no just come on like what's the point? Like what do you get into right? Sure. But any other how would you identify or articulate what that emotional talk is like or I mean because sometimes I just think oh they're starting to cry. Like why are we crying like what's going on? Sure. I'm sure. Gosh. I think a great if I could use and this is this might be tangential as well but if I could use an example from the business world and then come back to your question. There is a woman whose name is Francis fry. She is a Harvard Business school professor and in 2017 some of you may be familiar that Uber their company started tanking really quick and they were having all kinds of internal and managerial problems. So they brought this woman in. Francis Frey and had her clean up the culture and at Uber and one of the things that she says is that they were really missing were empathy logic and authenticity. Okay so then she goes and talks about these things. She's written a brilliant book called unleashed. The unapologetic leader's guide to empowering everyone around you. Anyway she talks about logic and she talks specifically about women communicating logic. So your question is what does it look like? Okay when it's this journey when they're going on this story. And she explains it that there are two ways really

to communicate in the world and she draws this example on the board of a triangle and one is with the triangle point up top and the other is with the triangle down below. She says many people and what can be considered more difficult in the boardroom in the council wherever it is is the inverted triangle where the point is down. So if you can imagine that triangle they start telling the story. They start they set the stage and they're explaining everything. This actually is very effective and it's used quite a lot in our sacrament meeting talks. At church for sure. So if you can imagine it in that setting has been very exciting and useful and of course you have a captive audience. Nobody is there going to be interrupting you unless it's our dad who. Lift the light on me when I was a teenager. She was our patient. He interrupted you during a talk? Yeah because in the old days we had those little lights on like he flipped the light on. I was taken too long ago anyway. Neither here nor there. So you're saying don't flip the light on women. That's exactly where we're going with. Are you done yet? No. Oh my gosh. Anyway so that mode of communication though is how many women communicate. That's a natural way because what they're trying to do is they're trying to build their case. They're trying to give you all of the information so that you will understand their final point. Because they're starting broad and they're getting more and more and then they get narrower narrow and then at the very bottom of that triangle is the thesis. This is the point I'm trying to make which is that we need 6 liters and not four liters at high adventure camp. So that's what they're doing. Well what Frances fry suggests is that when women if women can learn and anybody who tends to navigate toward this mode of communication if they can flip the triangle and she says if you can just start when she says like a half sentence a concise half sentence of what you're trying to say first. Then do your explanations and she said what she started seeing in Uber's culture was that the more women practiced this and this is the thing right that women aren't always doing in the home. This isn't a natural thing in home or very highly relationally focused. Connections that they do learn and have to learn when they're out in any other. Working church environment. And she says they advantage to actually doing it this way for men or women.

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Anybody who has a tendency to communicate that is just if you start at the top of the triangle then you go and start doing all your supporting evidence. That way if you're interrupted which most women are before they get done explaining themselves. Their point has already been made and the man in organizations don't take credit for the point because oftentimes when women are starting up here and doing all of their journey and explanations they're interrupted because the guy over here who's really sharp going oh I see where she's going with this. So are you saying we need four liters? And he just cuts to the chase and then she's lost all of that ground. Gotcha. Obviously we're talking about a men and women dynamic. This happens for men to is just not as often not as consistently far more it happens to women. Anyway so just as a more practical thing looking for when you say what does it look like? It just looks like the need the desire to tell the whole story first. And there's room on both sides. We don't have infinite time. I would love for you to hear my entire life story so you could really know where I'm coming from. We don't have time for that in our meetings. We just don't if we don't want to be there all day and we want to get home to our families. So every one of us has to figure out ways to

communicate that we can get this point across give our supporting evidence as we need to and then move on. Yeah. So I'm just thinking like a sister sitting in a word council meeting or thinking okay I need to engage with this. I don't like maybe the direction that it's headed. I want to get some feedback maybe mentally go through this exercise of saying okay what's the point? What is the one thing I want to communicate and then I'm going to start with that and then head elsewhere. Nice. I'd like to add just a little something to that too that in the telling of the story there will be included a lot of feelings because for many women that is that is how we work and move through the world. That is how I feel about this and then how that changed the course of events or how this feeling is affecting is or even right now I don't feel what I need to feel to be able to move forward that there has to be space for that because in the same way that for many men logic does not include feelings for many women logic is the feelings and the transitions of and flow and change of the feelings. In the process. Yeah. So there may be the sense of like I can tell that my bishop is hearing me logically like he understands the words coming out of my mouth but I don't feel understood. Like there's something there's like a dismissal in the communication to some level right? And where do you go from there? Well I mean we're Jamie and I go from there is Friends. We've got this podcast and it's full of all sorts of ideas and tools and even validation and eye opening experiences that can help. So that when that happens a woman can in that position say I'm not ready to leave this topic because something I don't feel settled about something that just happened here. You know or be able to find the words to say what she needs to say or can we visit about this later or any of a number of things as long as she can communicate I'm not on board with where this is going and that matters. And that is sort of I mean you have to take some practice a little bit saying hey we can move on but just so you know. Yes. I'm not settled on this. Yes. Well that's what our podcast is trying to do. A lot of what we talk about on our podcast these are simple things when we talk about the importance of genuine listening there isn't a person out there who doesn't understand that listening is valuable. Right. But it's really being able to do the deep work required so that the listening is effective and so if you know the skill sets for women to start finding the words even just to express their unsettledness and then also the leaders finding some words to say I can see that this is important to you and I can see that maybe you need some more time and maybe you and I should have a one on one conversation about this at another time. You know so that both sides can say I recognize this is something that you're experiencing what can we do? And it matters. Yeah and it matters. Because there's often this feeling of like okay we have an hour worth of word counsel meeting here and this here we are 35 minutes in. We got to you know there's other things we need to talk about. So these things you don't have to settle the conversation within the context of that meeting. You could then say you know I can see that we're not there yet. Why don't we you and I talk and then we'll bring that back to me because oftentimes it's a one to one conversation happening in a meeting. Absolutely. Winter reality that doesn't happen to happen in the meeting taking elsewhere. And that's an easy cultural shift we can just start saying it and then other women start going oh I can say that. I can say that I can just say wait I'm not settled. Can we revisit this later? That's easy enough.

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It's a good place to start. Anything else as far as maybe transitioning just in like we've identified some and I'm just going to review these assumptions like assuming that we're all on the same skill set when it comes to being present in a council assuming that only one person in the room and I guess this conflates with the next one is as far as like the weight of opinions in the room just because the bishop has been ordained with keys does not mean he brings more weight with his opinion. It's still his opinion right? And revelation can still be found in those other opinions in the room. The faulty assumption that we all communicate the same. The false assumption that a strong personality there's something wrong with a strong personality and that seems to be magnified in the context of women. Anything as far as and maybe this you know this feeling of in this word always gets me unanimity in a council and this is maybe what you talked about where the goal needs to be unanimity and induction of governance that talks about this and the example you gave the corner of the 12. I mean this is what they're constantly striving for. It's not majority rule. And this is maybe where we fall into that pitfalls often times the majority of genders in the room are male and the majority often rules or you know or sort of this the gymnastics of unanimity where we sort of are aiming for it but you know one or two people aren't on board but hey come on just get with the program. You know we sort of push them into the opinion and then we can move on because we've reached unanimity. But this really striving for pure unanimity of saying like no no you don't understand. We will come back to this if we're not if we're not settled right? Or if somebody in this room is not settled or we'll have conversations out of the room right? Anything else to add to the concept of unanimity we haven't touched on? Well yeah it just brings to mind this quote that we referenced in our podcast on this topic from elder Ballard in his book on counsels and he says that if leaders will invite women to contribute and participate in the councils. That it will open the floodgates of heaven. And what that says to me is that that there's no other way. Like genuinely if we want to have the spirit to be free flowing and to edify all women must be invited to contribute and they must have the room to share what they need to share and what the spirit has to say through them. And so to me that's just at the core of what should happen that the flow of a meeting or getting it all out done or packing it all in has to come secondary to to this. To the invitation to speak. Yes. I could do like to reemphasize that. This is Jamie again. They're real need and this is my opinion but Kurt's gonna listen to it. Well thousands of it. I do think that they're I think there is great value in giving time to create unanimity instead of just accomplishing if it means that we don't hold the state Valentine dance this year because we are spending more time to become unified first. I think that that is personally far more valuable than any of the programs in any of the other things going on. I just think of the COVID has taught us that it is okay to rein it back. And focus on you know that the spirit free flow in the council because you start practicing that you get better at it and then you'll recognize more quickly oh yep the spirits I feel this okay we're all going in the same direction and you're not battling the dynamics the entire you know your entire tenure in that calling because you've battled that out at the beginning. You put the work into the unanimity first. Well and you I think what you said about that was spot on it takes time. And we have to be invested in giving it the time it needs so that we can get better at it and have it bless our wards and our then trickle out to the families. Yeah. Because this is often the concern I hear when you talk about unanimity. It's like you know that's a really cute concept on paper. But we have 30 things we need to talk about and I don't got time to reach unanimity on each one at some point we got to make decisions to move on right? And so I love that how you articulate we're sort of stepping

back and saying like okay we have to master the skill of unanimity before we can even start accomplishing anything in the world or start talking about anything right? And so really focusing on the you know even if you start with a simple example of an activity or who's speaking in sacrum meaning saying like what does unanimity feel like? 'cause oftentimes we reach an annuity but it's fake unanimity.

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It's like I know everybody in the room doesn't agree with this but you want to go home because you hate meetings as much as I hate meetings right? And so just like clearing the agendas for a while and just saying we are just going to practice the skill of unanimity and figure that out and then that list of 30 items it'll move much quick much more quickly because. We all feel understood. We all have we all step forward and speak and these types of things. So yeah really really powerful. All right so just like speak to your audience are Whitman you know that are seeking to be heard and understood in these various settings that often are found in our church. So any other skill sets are encouragement as far as how we go about that and then maybe we'll talk to the men for a bit of some things they can do. But anything else women can do. Like if you were coaching someone's like okay you're about to walk in a word council meeting. Here we go. Remember these things? One of the things we talked about in our podcast was. Just recognizing authoritative and more precise language. Women apologize entirely too much. We don't need to say we're sorry for contributing okay? Let's take the words I'm sorry. We're interrupting. I mean hopefully there's not too much interruption but there's going to be an interruption and. Words like Jess. Well I just wanted to say okay? Take out the word just. I'd like to say this is you know this is what I'm saying. Or maybe we could do this. You know those are things that women tend to use. Those are words that women tend to use that can dudu. Yeah lessen the impact of what their contribution is. And I think that sometimes conflict comes into that a little bit like oh like two other people have disagree with me. I'm just going to shrink okay sure whatever you want to do. And that's not just a women issue. I think in our religious culture any religious culture where we're striving to be Christ like people we accidentally become nice people and nice is not not the goal here right? I mean yeah we will automatically be nice people and there are great ways to communicate well and effectively that where we can still be honor that the humanity of the other person with whom we are communicating. Jesus always did that. He never diminished the person that he was with. But he was able to be forthright and direct when he needed to he was able to not say anything when he needed to and he was able to communicate softly when he needed to. And this is work. We have to figure out how to do this well. And this is this is our process Jody and I have we feel that this is an important process. And so we've dedicated a lot of time and now we're trying to share a few things we've learned but it's a real thing for us. So avoid the over apologies. For sure start with that. And be okay with saying no. And that you know is a complete sentence. That's the other one. You know? Yeah that's great. Well in this this trickles into something that I was going to add which is just to reassure women that it might get messy and that's okay. Like we will never learn how to do this if we don't just to open our mouths and get it out and have it kind of fall apart at some point and then have to you know after that meeting makes sense of it regroup may be call somebody

maybe work it out but it is much more important to just practice saying what's coming up and letting it be messy until it can be refined. Yeah. And just the concept of embracing the mess even from you know and we'll talk more in the context of men. But like I see this happen a lot where especially in the context of calling. So it's like okay this calling processors is all these people. There's all these callings and all these organizational leaders and they keep suggesting names and no that person is not available and don't pray about that name. Here's three names consider one of those right? And it becomes so messy. So what we do is we default to okay we're not going to say this but the bishop is just going to make the calls from here on out. We're going to just staff the primary because that way it's nice clean cut and beautiful right? But we really have to embrace the messy. And just be like you know yeah there's some conflict here and let's sit with it and discuss it and see if we led to deeper revelation. Again right yeah. Yeah to make room for that spirit. So recognize it'll get messy anything else as far as coaching of women going walking into the word council. We haven't mentioned. This is more of a concept than a skill but just to remember that groups that make decisions that involve the contributions of women are on the whole more they're happier with the decisions that they make. And so for women just to be able to bring that with them and to trust that when they open their mouths and when they contribute with their full hearts in these kinds of counsels then it will make a difference and people overall will feel better. That's just one of the contributions that women bring.

00:40:02 - 00:45:01

Yeah that's great. All right we're about to coach in the bishopric walking into the word council and there's going to be some women there. So as a woman what would you say how would you coach that bishop right? First thing is not women who are broken. It's the society and the culture that is that's not right. So if any leaders are still holding on to anything related to that over emotionality over sensitivity equals brokenness it's not true. Or even too directness too much strength. It's not brokenness. Yeah. Yeah and the way I'm thinking that in my head is walking in there you say I'm going to be an advocate for really strong female opinions like if that person who's like I'm going to make because I remember this happened to me as bishop there's a primary president who just had this strong personality and you can sort of sense when she started talking everybody's like. Please like why do we have to make this a big deal going just move past this right? But just saying hey you know what we're going to create some space here sister so and so has some concerns. And we're going to create space for those things to be impactful and sort of being that advocate that ally for that individual in that meeting right that there's nothing wrong with that person being in that room. I would say that as and maybe this is another thing that men can do as well. But as when you just gave that example if a bishop were even to advocate for her in that moment or even validate oh excellent thank you I can feel your enthusiasm or that I can tell that this is important to you or so what you're saying is and you just reiterate what they have said that people who have a lifetime of feeling like they need to be aggressive in order to be heard start softening because they're being heard. Yeah. Imagine. And so you want to really help if you're feeling like it really is too aggressive or men or women you know they're coming on too strong or whatever that is just recognize that as we validate as we

start seeing people as real and as a leader being willing to just take on you know my role today is not to look at anybody askew. I am just going to take it as they're giving it to me and I'm going to give as much love and support back in the moment as I can. It changes over time. You know after two meetings after 6 meetings after 6 months you start seeing that unity it does it flows more quickly and we start feeling safe and when especially for women when we feel safe we don't have to come in with our guns blazing. Yeah. Pretty much safety. Because we know we know we're going to be hurt. That's great. And there's this feeling of I mean what if the say the bishop disagrees with the primary president in this context of award council? I mean sometimes I know women don't want to be treated with kid gloves by any means but it comes back to that sensitivity thing like well what if I come back and disagree with her? And she's like that hits harder than maybe others right? And now she really is just think sir bishop hates her or whatever I'm like no I'm just trying to be her or disagree a little bit. Any advice on how to handle that debate or disagreement with women? Well my belief about that circumstance is that the bulk of the weight of that responsibility does lie on the shoulders of the bishop in that circumstance. And I guess I think about it maybe in terms of the way a parent because there's a power differential. And so the way in terms that a parent would talk to a teenager about and maybe disagree but not want to alienate that person or shut them down but still keep open the flow of communication that the bishop or the other leader that's the steward at the time I guess. Needs to shoulder the bulk of that responsibility and find softer ways to disagree. Find ways to you know redeeming parts of the contribution and see if you can encourage the conversation to end up in a better place together but in a meeting like that the tone that tone of unanimity has to be said by the leader. Yeah. Yeah that's helpful. And I'll add that my own experience working at one point with a deeply loving steak president. When the time came for him to disagree with me because he had set a precedent for so long of trying to make that good connection and this is the same with your teenagers and not even with the power differential but just any good connected relationship. When there is a lot of good if you need to correct it's not just perfect as personally.

00:45:01 - 00:50:14

Yeah there's room. So we're not sitting around waiting you know to lash out because we've been criticized for many they're just they're probably hearing it all over the place. And so that's what they're reacting to. And so again granted at the beginning of the relationship it's going to be messier because you're going to work through that but if over time the sisters that you're working with are seeing that if she leaves and she's overwhelmed and upset and a wise leader says calls her up later in the day and says sister I think we left something unfinished. You know in the past ten 2050 years ago there would have been no follow-up. That would not have been a thing. Yeah that felt because it's not so much like oh there's this tactic that you use and in the moment it goes away but it's more about their relationship. Not necessarily. Right. Well Jay brings up a really interesting point in that as well that I think is worth addressing that out of all of our episodes still some of the most popular episodes is our series on anger. Because when you start to talk to women about speaking up then they have to start looking at all the ways that they haven't spoken up and they feel angry with themselves and angry with others for not giving

them opportunities or for shutting them down. And so that is going to be a part of the process but it can be worked through and the women can work through it and so can the men that it affects. But I think that the male leaders need to know that it might come up and that it's okay. It can be navigated and you can still get to a place of unanimity. Yeah. And that's what I really appreciate about this discussion because again as men we often default to oh so what I need to do is just get more women in the room which might be the case but then it's like great I did it like that. We're there. But it's walking brother. Yeah. But it's more of like being willing to step into the arena of and again it's going to be messy. There's going to be hurt feelings but as you're mainly aiming for the deeper relationship with all involved in making sure you know are you heard? Like what am I missing? And this is what I found beneficial as a bishop like having routine one to one meetings with the relief society president and primary president of just like it creates everybody's gone and you can now say all right like how am I doing? Like what am I missing? And they now have a platform to say let me give you three things. I'm glad you asked. Yes. But if you just think you're going to walk into word council in these concerns are going to come to the top or be like oh I has the primary present. I feel very unsafe right now like oh wow so I'm glad that you mentioned that because I know that's not going to happen right? You have to engage with these relationships and really push and find that connection so that they say well I finally feel safe to say this but I hate your meetings. And actually I did this with a steak president once I'm like I hate the steak bishop Rick meetings. It's a waste of my time. But we had that relationship and he heard okay. But I'm a little bit forthright of a person that probably helps. But not everybody's going to get there without that safety right? And that's what we want to establish to that safety and engagement of relationship right? Yeah. And I'll just one last thing that just as a man a lot of that in our culture you've been raised with. Thank you. So even if you in the state president haven't had this deep long-term relationship you come to it with a sense of safety anyway it within yourself many women do not carry that within them. So just be aware be aware that they're not carrying that and so it does fall a little bit more on the person in charge. Did you prioritize that if they want unity? If you don't want you to dance you're fine. You know what? That's right. Disregard. You can scrap it. And her ideas. And her opinion. People will secretly despise you. Before we wrap up I want to just run through and just highlight some of these titles you have. The series on anger I think is great. Equality of Adam and Eve that's interesting speaking up with emotional maturity. Every voice counts what is peacemaking? Fascinating. How to not ruin an apology. That's great. And many many others any. I mean we sort of highlight it and there's a whole episode about this. It's called win outnumbered by men published July 22nd 2021. But any other like places that you would encourage people to start with a podcast to begin a really good flavor and some good content to begin with. Yeah Jodi mentioned the anger. I think that's a good place and again because when you start to speak up for many women and you know some women may discount this or think I already know how to speak up. But if you want to really do it effectively that just from personal experiences whether or not you're a forthright person or not effective speaking up is very very difficult for most people. So starting with that because recognizing you know your own emotional response and that could bring up a lot of anger is a great place to kind of move forward and work through that so that you're not carrying the anger and then can get past that and start showing up the way you want to show up.

00:50:14 - 00:54:16

Yeah. Perfect. Go ahead. I would just reference one other series that we did on the three main parts of speaking up which is like getting clear and then actually speaking up and then living with the consequences of speaking up. Okay. And so that's just kind of a foundational series that we put together that would be good to take a look at. So the people can find it anywhere where they're listening to this podcast. That's right. Search for speak up. Step sister. Sister. Sister. I was just trying to be so cool. Thanks. I agree great title and I'm excited to see future future episodes. So maybe what we'll end with is have each of you just what final encouragement would you give to women? Like just a general encouragement of women who are trying to better speak up or establish that habit in their life. In my own personal experience the whole is exponentially greater than the sum of its parts little changes and anybody who follows the savior Jesus Christ understands this intuitively. When you make small changes to bring more light into who you are and into the lives of others it grows. It affects other things when you start speaking up effectively you will find just deeper connections in your relationships more peace in your own heart and just a general feeling of contentment and happiness that just doesn't come anywhere other than with the savior and it's this process it's worth the work. Yeah. Jodie? My personal experience has been that it has been I have felt so alive and connected to the spirit and my heavenly parents. In my speaking up and I came from a place of not saying much ever and just defaulting to what somebody else wanted most of the time and had to learn that in my motherhood and in experiences that I had at work and at church and some of them were grueling but to be closer to a place where I feel that sense of connection and feel a permission to express it in ways that don't diminish myself or others. There is a spiritual connection there that makes me just so grateful for the process and for all of the hard work that it takes. That concludes this episode of the leading saints podcast. We'd love to hear from you about your questions or thoughts or comments. You can either leave a comment on the post related to this episode at [leading saints dot org](http://leading saints dot org) or go to [leading saint studor slash contact](http://leading saint studor slash contact) and send us your perspective or questions. If there's other episodes or topics you'd like to hear on the leading saints podcast go to [leading saints dot org slash contact](http://leading saints dot org slash contact) and share with us the information there. And we would love for you to share this with any individual you think this would apply to especially maybe individuals in your word counsel or other leaders that you may know who would really appreciate the perspectives that we discussed. And remember text the word lead to four 747 four 7 in order to access the three free sessions of the LGBT saints library. It came as a result of the position of leadership which was imposed upon us by the God of heaven who brought forth a restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ and when the declaration was made concerning the all and only true and living church upon the face of the earth. We were immediately put in a position of loneliness. The loneliness of leadership from which we can not shrink or run away. And to which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.