



## The Research Behind Becoming Christlike | An Interview with Ryan Gottfredson

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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. Leading saints is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping Latter day Saints be better prepared to lead. And we do that through content creation, like this podcast, which we hope useful subscribe to. We also have a website at leading saints dot org with thousands of incredible articles all about leadership in the context of being a latter day saint, we host virtual summits, live events, and also have a weekly newsletter to keep you up to date on all things happening with leading saints. Visit leading saints dot org for more information. I am downtown in a secluded spot at the salt palace with Ryan Godfrey. What's up Brian? Yeah, it's just been enjoying a conference. I'm here for the association for talent development conference, which is usually really big, like 16,000 people. But there's only 3000 people here this year. COVID pandemic. And so yeah, we've kind of found this little nook where I don't think we're going to be bothered because we were really not many people here. You were in town. You reached out to me told me you were coming to this conference. And I'm like, hey, yeah, let's at least meet up. And while we're at it, let's record a podcast because you always

have genius to share with us. I don't know about that. Yeah, we'll see what comes out, I guess. You know, we just broadcast and republished your episode about community. We recorded that years ago. It's funny, I think some people, even though I say at the beginning of the episode, this is a rebroadcast. Some people don't realize it and they're like, wow, that recent episode. I'm like, oh yeah, I forgot what I even said in that. I must have been good, but anyways, the community aspect, I think has helped a lot of individuals and then even after that we did an episode about your recent book success mindsets. And phenomenal book. And it seems like generally speaking, even outside of the church, and it's not a church book. It's business leadership book. It's being well received, right? Yeah, fortunately, it hit The Wall Street Journal and USA Today bestseller list when it launched back in May of 2020 and then it's still selling and still out there, which is good and yet different organizations will pick it up and it's really for an organizational audience, but really you can apply the idea of mindsets to everybody in any situation because our mindsets are foundational to everything that we do. Yeah, it's true. And so just give general background about who you are, where you're from what you do for people who may be their first exposure to Ryan Godwinson. Yeah, so I grew up in North Ogden, Utah and graduated with my bachelor's degree Brigham Young University went to Indiana University for my PhD program in organizational behavior and human resources. And I did my dissertation on leadership and it led me to review the last 70 years of leadership research, which is really cool, learned a lot. And what I learned is that the vast majority of leadership research over the last 70 years is primarily focused on answering one question. What do leaders need to do to be effective? And I think it's a valuable question that's led to some really good answers very practical answers, but it never really sat well with me because it feels a little bit short sighted because I feel like leadership is less about doing the right things and it's about being a certain type of person. And so after Indiana University, I took a job at Cal State Fullerton where I'm still at associate professor I just got ten years so I can now say it professionals. Which is great. And so really for the last 7 years, my focus in terms of my research, my teaching and even now my consulting has been, how do we tap into the being element of leadership and help leaders to become better leaders as opposed to just maybe doing the right things checking the boxes? Yeah. And that perfect reflection on our church experience and really any human experience. But, you know, as we go to church and I have this inside joke with my wife that we hear certain talks or whatever, and I say this is a really, this is a doo doo talk, you know? Or I hear other talks I'm like, oh, I love this. This is a BB talk, where it's all about becoming identity. It's all about grace. These things. And we can sort of default to that position of this is what we've got to do or in it's tough as I have experienced various, especially state conferences. It seems like it's the case with state conference more than others because this is like the one opportunity this stake presidency has in 6 months to really communicate with the stake as a whole.

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So they default to, hey, we really need to do whatever. This research in this perspective is really universal, right? Yeah, I think so. Yeah, and I think as we get into our conversation, it's really, I think the gospel is all about being. But oftentimes in the church, we do boil it down to the doings. I mean, it's been interesting. I think when I serve my mission and probably when your served

your mission, you had the white handbook, right? And this is a list of doings and not doings. And it was kind of like you're either obedient or you're not. It's in your level of worth is almost connected to the degree to which you are doing or not doing certain things, and it misses the deeper purpose of your being. Who you are as a person, and are you becoming more like our savior Jesus Christ, which I think is the purpose of the gospel. Or at least that's my take on it. I would confer. And really, when we focus on the doing, it always goes back to the identity. We begin to identify ourselves by what we are doing when in reality we should start with the identity and realize that once we accept our identity we start to do really good things just naturally. So you have another book in the works. This is what leadership authors do. They're always working on their next book. As you should. And so tell us about this because it's going to be sort of the core of our discussion. Yeah, so it's really pushed me and I feel like I've really grown a lot as a person. I stumbled across the concept that's called vertical development. So I've been focusing on mindsets, and as I came across this concept of vertical development, I realized that when you focus on mindsets, you're actually helping people vertically develop in us. Oh my goodness, this is awesome. This is a new way to package what I do. But then I've been diving into it more deeply. And I feel like it has some really profound implications for personal growth on a variety of levels, emotionally, spiritually and maybe even physically. Well, obviously, even surely physically. So, yeah, vertical development is the topic. And I think it's a topic that even as I the concept has been around for about 40 years. But it is rare, I play in the leadership space. It's rarely talked about in organizations. It's really utilized in organizations and I think it has some very profound implications for in the church and that something that I think we can all value from. At least I've value from and I think others can as well. So let's go back to the mindset. Let's bring the 6 year olds in the room and say if you were talking to a group of 6 year olds just quickly because obviously we did whole podcasts on that. We'll link to it. People should listen to it. But just the concept of mindsets, what do you mean by that when you talk about mindsets? Yeah. So I think a lot of people think of mindsets as being their attitude towards something. But our mindsets are actually so much more than that. And maybe I'll answer it in a couple of different levels. Surface level is our mindset to the mental lenses that we wear that shape how we view the world. Because and this is essential because how we view the world shapes how we think how we learn and how we behave. Such as how do we make meaning of the church handbook, for example, do we see it as this is like hard and fast to restrictive restrictive or do we see this as more of a guide? And how we see it is going to change how we think about the handbook. How we think about how we make decisions about what we do and not do within our words. And so just our mindset shape, how we see the world and therefore how we operate within the world. So that's at one level, but we could even get deeper and connected back even to neuroscience that our mindset really are specific neural connections within our mind that essentially program us from seeing and making meaning of things in certain ways. And it's the reason why some people can see failure as something to avoid because they believe it says something about them, or they see failure as an awesome opportunity to learn and grow. And how we see failure will shape how much we end up learning and growing throughout our lifetime. All right, so now pivot towards this vertical development concepts now that we have that understand. Yeah, so vertical development is really interesting. The concepts of vertical development came out of developmental psychology. So developmental psychology has been around for a 120 years. But for the first 80 of these years, they really only focused on childhood

development. Because it's pretty easy to see that children develop as they age. And they wanted to classify this. So now we have a variety of different frameworks that show us that children develop through different developmental stages as they move from childhood to adulthood. But they didn't really look at adult development because it's harder to see adults development. In fact, it's quite difficult to see that. But then, about in the 1970s, some researchers came along, they said, I think some people develop. Maybe not everybody, and if so, do they develop in certain stages? Like, during adulthood, during adulthood, and what they found is that yes, adults can develop, but not everybody does.

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So it's interesting because childhood development suggests that development is really a function of age. As you get older, you will develop. But when we become an adult, our development no longer becomes a function of age, it then becomes a function of effort. And what research is found is that there's three primary adult development stages. And that 64% of all adults don't develop beyond stage one. 35% developed a stage two and only 1% developed a stage three. And these different stages, if you're a stage three, that's a more positive thing than stage one. So what vertical development is, what vertical development is? I guess let me qualify this by saying that there's two different forms of development. There's horizontal development, and then there's vertical development. So horizontal development is adding new knowledge skills and capabilities to what we have. So this is like adding an app onto an iPad. What we're doing with this new app is it's broadening our functionality. We can now do more than what we could do previously. And I think you think about your college or high school classes. This was essentially what we're doing is we're adding new knowledge and skills so that we could do more than what we could do previously. Well, the downside the limitation of horizontal development is it doesn't necessarily improve how effectively that iPad functions. So vertical development is all about improving that iPad's operating system or our internal operating system. So the technical definition of vertical development is elevating our ability to make meaning of our world in more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated ways. So when we look at these three different vertical development levels, as we increase in those levels, we are making meaning of our world and more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated ways. So let me bring this to life. So how would you say most people respond to constructive criticism, negatively? Right? They'll get or they feel bad about it or they'll get offensive, right? Most people, not everybody. Most people get defensive, right? Because they see constructive criticism as an attack. Yeah, yeah. They are making meaning of constrictive criticism in the attack. Is this emotionally cognitively and emotionally sophisticated? It's justifiable. Yeah, yeah. When we see it as an attack. But I do not sure it's cognitively and emotionally sophisticated. So that's like level one people. That's how they react to constructive criticism. When we get up to level two, they'll make meaning of a little bit differently. They might say, well, it depends on who delivers it and how they deliver it. That feels a little bit more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated. But it's still nodded that top level. So at that top level, people who are the most cognitively and emotionally sophisticated, they say I like receiving constructor criticism regardless of who delivers it and how they deliver it because it is an opportunity for me to learn

and grow. They get to this mental place where they are good with being told that they are bad. And it's just not easy to get there. It takes a lot of cognitive and emotional sophistication to be able to get there. So that hopefully helps you to see what this idea of cognitive and emotional sophistication is. And then vertical development is elevating up that ladder of cognitive and emotional sophistication. Gotcha. So in our organizations or even in our personal development, we may feel like we're adding more apps to our personal development, but we need to look at the operating system rather than just, hey, now I can do this thing or now I have this additional scale or whatever is that. So maybe let me just touch on each of these different levels. Just a little bit more. So at each of these different levels, we have an internal operating system that is programmed to accomplish multiple needs or fulfill multiple needs. So at this bottom level, I call it mind one. We are focused on obtaining three needs. Our comfort our safety and our belonging. So effectively, we're kind of like a penguin. An emperor penguin. And if you like, this is the image that comes to mind. And we want if you've seen these huddles of penguins, we want to get right to the center of that huddle, because that's where we're going to feel the most safe, the most comfortable and the most like we belong. So everything that we do, we see through this lens of does this help me feel more safe, more comfortable and like I belong. That's our internal operating system. And it's a self protective operating system. We want to protect ourselves being in the middle of that. And it's justifiable, but it's just not very emotionally cognitively and emotionally sophisticated. The next level up is this mind two. And when we get here, we develop different needs. So mind one, we have the needs to stand in. I think is one of the ways to say it. A mind level two, we have the needs to stand out.

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We want to be seen. We want to be recognized. We want to advance. We want to win. We want to get ahead. So we don't want to be a penguin that's in the middle of the huddle. We want to be a penguin that's on the outside and seen and recognized by those in the huddle. So oftentimes, in fact, leaders are mind two. In fact, what research on executives is found is 85% of all executives are in mind two. And they want to they want to be kind of in charge of all of these one people. They see these mine one point, you know, people as being there to help them accomplish their goals and get ahead. And so you're saying this is more sophisticated, but it seems sort of like a negative that seems very prideful or inward rather than outward, but it is sort of more sophisticated. How do you reconcile that? Yeah, so it is a little bit, right? It's still self focused, but the reason why it's more sophisticated is when we're in mind one, we are dependent thinkers. We see what we do is we exchange our power and our independence in order for greater safety comfort and belonging that a group can give us. And so we are inclined to align with the ideas and philosophies of the group, and all I'll let the leader tell me what to do just as long as I'm safe I'm comfortable and I belong. So at mind level one, we are dependent thinkers. When we move into mind level two, we become independent thinkers. We no longer adhere to everything that our group says and we develop more independent beliefs. Like maybe I really like these beliefs from the group, but these other beliefs over here that I just don't fully agree with, and I develop my own independent sense of belief. And it sounds like connecting this to some doctor and the concept of agency is starting to surface. You're suddenly

internalized the concept of agency and you're I think a positive thing, right? Yeah, yeah. For sure. And so this is mind level one and two. And then as we jump into mind level three, I call it, so mind level two is self reward mode. It's still a little self focused. Mind level three is we don't care about standing in, and we don't care about standing out. What we care about is contributing, adding value and lifting. And so we no longer are self focused. We are now externally focused. We're focused on others and helping them contributing to them help lifting them and elevating them. So we were no longer. This is no longer about us. It's about others. And that's this level that's the most cognitively and emotionally sophisticated because here we're no longer dependent thinkers or independent thinkers, we are inter dependent thinkers. We're able to see multiple perspectives we're able to sit in complexity, right? So oftentimes what happens if let's just take a polarizing topic like gaze in the church. For example. So I think this is, you know, and we could even talk about politics, right? Mine one people, they generally go with whatever their group believes. And usually that's one side or the other. Mine two people is they come up with their own independent beliefs, but it's usually on one side or the other. And once they come up with their beliefs, they hold pretty rigidly to them. Mine three people, and let me back up going to two people like typically those individuals may hold onto one belief, but they may step out and maybe write up a Facebook post that says, this is where I'm at like I stand in this position and this is the best, you know, they're sort of leaving that pack and actually making themselves be heard. Yep. There's this element of I've studied this for myself and here's now where I stand. Just testifying component to it. Whether it's a social issue or even a doctor or an issue. For sure. When we get into this mind three, is we they see the complexity of it, right? This is a really complex topic and that there are multiple perspectives here and they want to understand both perspectives and what their end up willing to do is they end up willing to sit in the middle. They sit in the mud with this. And their tension of it. Yeah, and they're okay sitting in the mud because they know that there's not one right answer because there's multiple perspectives of this and it's a rarely will you find a mine three person polarized on any topic because they understand that there are some pros and cons to any topic. And they're okay with that. That's this mental maturity that they have and it's uncommon. This is why we only see 1% of adults get to this place. And my mind is going to the savior. You know, so many examples of the savior that obviously, he was a very contributing person. And he was sitting in this messiness, eating with the sinners or really challenging some of the status quo. It was there. It's interesting to reflect on the saviors we go through these. So I think to me, this has been the thing that has been maybe one of the most eye opening elements about this is we talked about earlier.

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What's the purpose of the gospel? Becoming more like our savior. Absolutely. How do you become more like your savior? Is it through downloading more apps on the iPad? Or is it through upgrading the iPad's operating system? Well, it's upgrading the iPad's operating system. But here's the challenge is we're so accustomed to horizontal development. What do our talks in our church lessons boil down to? Here is the knowledge and skills that you need to have, and it's not about thinking and operating in any more complex way. So unpack that a little

bit more. Like, what do you mean or what are some hypothetical examples? Yeah, purely hypothetical, right. I'm sure. Well, well, it's interesting. So one example that comes to mind is we had a gentleman who gave a talk in church several weeks ago very well intended and very passionate, you know, it was a good talk. And he was speaking to the youth at this point in time. And he says, it's really challenging to be a youth these days. There's a lot of information that's coming out. You know, even about the church, and maybe you get pushed in your testimony. And he went on, let me give you some guidance here. And he says, if you have questions about the church, you need to don't go outside of the church to find answers. You need to talk to people who have a testimony of the church. And on the surface, this seems like good advice. And very well intentioned again. Very well. This isn't like this is just the nuances of leadership and our community, religious community, right? And when you look at this through the vertical development lens, is this is a little bit mine one coming out. It is, we need safety. We need comfort. We need belonging. You need to stay in. We need to stand in, and I think on a certain level at that level, it surely makes sense. But I don't know if it's ever appropriate to tell somebody that if you're seeking if you have questions and you're seeking answers, you only go to one source that is probably quite biased about it. Right. I mean, we could go to the extreme and say, you know, you would never, we would never want to say to somebody in Germany during World War II, like the only person you should talk to who's a fan of the Aryan race and the Nazi brotherhood. You don't talk to anybody outside of that, right? It's just an it is more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated to say if you have questions, in fact, you're probably going to get a lot of value from exploring a wide variety of philosophies. And recognizing that all of these sources are going to have some level of bias. So keep that in mind as you explore. For sure, right? Because what we're trying to do is by only talking to people inside the churches, we're trying to keep them safe, keep them sheltered, but at the same time, it also, I think stahl's some real potential growth. And if we really have the truth as we claim we do, then through their efforts of searching, they'll be led back here. They should be led back in or the youth grow up and they leave that circle of penguins at some point. They're in different circles. Still striving to maintain a religious belief in faith, but if they don't have those skills or that perspective, suddenly, they have that cognitive dissonance that blows up on them. Yeah, and so it kind of even extend this out. I mean, when you sit down and a Sunday school lesson, how does the teacher typically approach it? Well, we're covering a set of scriptures or if we're an elderly society we're covering a comfort sock, and how we typically talk about it is what do you need to know about this set of scriptures? Or what do you need to know about this topic? And rarely do we have conversations that are about becoming more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated about this particular thing. So for example, I think something that feels really complex to me is the concept of love the sinner hate the sin. To me, I find that really challenging on a conceptual and emotional level. And I feel like it's very difficult to have conversations about church about that particular topic. In a way that allows us to explore multiple different perspectives, and explore the complexity associated with that. It usually is almost like I feel like often times when I'm going to Sunday school, it's I'm the teacher, I have the information. It happens to be in this flash drive, and my job is to now just stick this flash drive in you and download the information. And once you have downloaded the information, you're going to be all set. Yeah. And I think that and that's just a horizontal development approach is the approach that we use in our classes in high school and college. Yeah, this is just thing. It's happening all over. This is our typical way of

development. So the concept of vertical development is really a novel and groundbreaking approach to thinking about how do we, how do we elevate? And because what we've got to do is we've got to make meaning of the world and more cognitively and sophisticated ways.

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We've got to move so that we see when people push against ideas that we believe in church and I mean, this is a huge challenge, I think in the church. Because there's actually a tension that exists. And the tension is between safety and truth. Because sometimes there's certain topics within the church that are the majority of people believe, but they aren't white and black. They're very great things. Let me give you, can I give you another example? Let's do it. Okay. I'm sitting in Sunday school one week and this is several years ago. And we're reading a passage from the Old Testament. And it happens to be a dialog between two individuals. And mentioned this in your community at the same time. Yeah, so I go ahead and get repetitive. And I just, I read this dialog and it's going back between two individuals and the teacher asked me, well, what does this mean to you? You know, and I was a little caught off guard and I'm well, but I feel uncomfortable actually answering this question, but because I actually feel like I'm not sure this dialog actually occurred the way that's written. This is my thoughts and people can disagree with that's fine. Because I'm like, this was a dialog that occurred. How many thousands of years ago and how many translations have we been through? Is this actually being communicated now in the exact same fashion that it went down? So I kind of expressed that, and I said, but regardless, I think here's the point that I think is trying to be made here. And maybe I didn't need to qualify my statement the way that I did. But the next 5 comments that popped up in our Sunday school class was we need to take the scriptures literally. They are the word of God. And it was really interesting. Because what is going on in this dynamic? Because I said something that went against maybe a majority's belief. And how do they perceive that as whether they're conscious of it or not, it was an attack to them and now they're defending it. So they're trying to protect their safety. I said something that pushed against their beliefs. And now they're stepping into protect it. So they're protecting their safety and kind of what I was after was seeking truth, trying to see this as accurately as possible. And oftentimes what goes on in the church dynamic is there's people that push against the majority because they have certain beliefs that maybe this is misaligned with truth. And they're wanting to explore it, and if people aren't able to see their and sometimes they don't do it very well or very tactfully and they don't have the tools to be able to do that effectively where they're at. But if we just need your reaction, get defensive. What we're doing is we're trying to protect our safety and we're not maybe open to the ideas of others. And really, I think the whole purpose of Joseph Smith is the ultimate example of this is just being a seeker of truth, seeking any perspective as a way to help us inform what we're doing. And of course, take it to God with whatever questions you have. But it's a simple idea of we need to create space that we need to develop the cognitive and emotional sophistication such that when people say something that we may disagree with, we don't need your reaction and shut it down because the consequence of that is a lack of psychological safety. But then I could hear people saying, well, when people push against my beliefs, I don't feel psychologically safe, right? So it's a dynamic that really we can not actually resolve until we elevate our

cognitive and emotional sophistication and we get to the point where we are okay with the idea of complexity. Yeah. And it's just not easy to get there. So let me give you an example, leadership example that sitting in a bishopric or as the bishop, you sort of fill this Hamburg articulate. You sort of feel this heavy responsibility that what goes on in sacrament meaning on what set over the lectern needs to be doctrinally sound because I call it the poison the well concept of what if somebody says a false doctrine, it's taught from an official meeting and then suddenly a group of the congregation begins to believe this false doctor. And so you sort of put this weight on yourself as a bishop like, oh no, they're saying they're sort of going off the rails here and they're saying things that is clearly not doctrinal. And so yeah, as a leader, you have this you have this option of standing up and saying brothers and sisters brother to spend love there is bless his heart completely wrong what he said, and I need to be very clear that that is false doctor. Now I don't think it happens that blatant or it will be more passive aggressive of we're going to talk with him outside. We're going to next week we're going to have three talks about to clarify what the doctor is. In reality, it's like, I'm going to be, I'm going to sit with the comfort of knowing that this person is on a spiritual journey, what he said is not accurate, but I know that he is seeking that and me standing up and taking away that safety of you got to watch what you say in this meeting, then he's more likely to not pursue that journey of truth and maybe some of the congregation will suddenly think, well, I never want to speak in sacrament.

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What if I say something that is wrong? And then we, you know, there's this concept even and you see in Sunday school, people you read description and you ask somebody, what do you think that means? You know, and we get the feeling that there's a right answer of doing that. So we default to PhDs on YouTube come follow me channel saying, I'm just going to listen to that guy and not trying to interpret this for myself, but it is in the interpreting where our operating system connects us with a God in a way that no other YouTube video or anything could happen again. I'm not disparaging YouTube videos. I watch them too. But you get what I'm saying. These are sort of the nuanced dynamics we deal with as leaders that keep us in that one. What are we calling it? The mind one. You got it. So I think we've laid out as far as these different what these different levels are. And there's three of them. It's really interesting because it then affects another place we could take this, it then affects how our leaders in our church, whether we're a state president, a bishop or released society president, a primary present, we're going to operate differently depending upon our mind level, because we have a different internal operating system. We're literally wired to focus on different things. So let me just give you some examples of commonly how this might play out. So if we're in mind one, the leader might be really focused on adhering to the handbook as it said. They are Uber focus of just making sure that everything is safe, comfortable and like people belong. And one should follow the handbook, but maybe it's like someone has a unique dynamic idea of an activity and you think well that's not in the hammock, so therefore we probably shouldn't do that even though it says it doesn't say we can't do it. But it's not in the ambit. So let's avoid it. Yeah. And I think one of the things that another way of saying what you just said is ideas are gonna come up and then we oftentimes go to the handbook to explore is this safe according to the church to be able to do.

And it is and it's okay to fall back to the handbook and to go by the hand, but then the question is do we even allow for a conversation about certain things to occur? Or do we just simply say, nope, Hamburg says no, but really there is some room for interpretation about that particular topic in the handbook. So a mind one leader is really primarily focused on just making sure no problems occur. We don't want to create mistakes. I don't want to be seen as somebody who causes problems, so I just want to do what safe we don't want to push the boundary on anything. And that's just the way that they're wired. Well, mine two people are wired a little bit differently. So they're more, for example, they might be a little bit more about the numbers. How do we win? How do we get ahead? What's our temple recommend percentage rate in our ward? What is our ministering numbers this month? And how are we getting? Are we advancing? Are we getting ahead or removing forward? And often times these leaders are kind of like, well, we're willing to maybe not adhere a 100% to the handbook because it actually might help us to get to some of these numbers. You know, how many convert baptisms are we having? And not that any of that is bad, but it's just the way that we're wired to think we want to win, we want to advance, we want to get ahead. We want to stand out, right? And oftentimes, and I've seen some of your work here recently Kurt where you've talked about how I wrote it down, I wanted to bring it up, because it fits into this a lot. Yeah. And so that's where when we're in line two, that's kind of what we're wired to do to aspire to advance to get ahead, move up in the church. Because there's a social currency that's around that. That surely has some value because I think we're most of us would like to think we're well intended when we have that because maybe if we put in a position of responsibility, we have greater opportunities to positively influence those around us, right? And so that's kind of how a mind two liter will operate. A mine three isn't is less concerned about adhering a 100% to the handbook is less concerned about driving certain numbers and is really concerned about how do we create an environment that will allow people to learn, grow, engage and develop. And they're much more focused on creating a culture that allows for growth and development. And they want to create a culture where everybody might whether you're inside or outside of the church, we want you to feel like you belong. That this is a very inclusive place. And that's the type of thing that really only the mind three leaders focus on. And they're a little bit more willing to see complexity that things aren't as white and black as they might be.

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And they're willing to dive into the muddiness. They're willing to sit down and have conversations with people, such as, you know, if you have a youth in your ward that happens to feel like they have same gender attraction rather than, you know, we're really worried about you. You know, we need to do something about this rather than see it as a problem to be fixed. Just ask questions. Be curious. Learn. Like, that's what a mine three leader does is they ask questions. They don't lead out with the answers. And so even within, let's just say, word counsel meeting, a mind three bishop is going to be somebody that's more inclined of I have questions, I want to get your thoughts. Whereas a mind one or a mine two liter, they're gonna say, I'm the one in control. I'm in charge and I have the answers, not the questions. And so they end up operating in a very different way, depending upon this internal wiring. I just had a conversation

with a steak of president in Spain, and he says, I thought it was a perfect example of this. He drove out to I don't know if they have a committee or whatever. But a group of young single adults. And he's introduced his remarks or that the discussion happening saying, I'm not here to teach you anything. I'm here to learn from you. So what are you seeing? What are you feeling? Like it was a very open discussion. And he learned a lot that he could then take back and do something within his leadership experience. Yeah. Even as you're saying that we even before we started this interview, we were both talking to a gentleman that we kind of mutually know that we ran into it this conference. And just while I was talking to him before we met up, he shared it an example of something that occurred in his word, and I've seen it go on in my steak as well where the bishopric had the youth write them questions that they had. And then at the event, the bishop spent two hours just answering questions, and there wasn't any dialog back and forth. There wasn't a follow-up. Here's one question. Let me give you an answer. Here's another question. Here's my answer. And he just kind of said, I just went away from that, just feeling like it was a missed opportunity to connect with the use. Creating more of a discussion rather than I'm here to answer your questions and here we go. Yeah. And going back to the aspiring and we'll link to it as far as the I did a whole episode and a whole new letter series about this concept of aspiring and how I feel like the culture that's come up around aspiring is actually maybe hurting us more than helping us because there's this feeling of like, oh yeah, you're never supposed to aspire, and this is maybe one where you're like, I'm in the group. I don't want to stand out or give people the impression that I need to lead in a way. So I'm actually going to proactively show that I'm not trying to have influence that I'm just keeping my head down and not doing anything. But there are these individuals who suffer in silence who that moment that prompting comes of like, you know, I think I could really be a good bishop. Suddenly it's like, oh no, no, no, no, that's the devil speaking. I've got to get that out of me. But in reality, you know, this is maybe a more sophisticated mindset that you're experiencing, it doesn't mean that you're hungry for power or anything like that. You're just thinking, I want to have an influence here and so the more we can move to that mindset of three where we're thinking, you know, I don't even need a title, but I think I can influence some ways. And in fact, I'm going to proactively influence the award or the group I'm in because that's a higher sophistication. That's who gods created me to be. You know, lesions, I am, we are God's workmanship. He created us not to just be in the pack of penguins, but to step out and really make a difference positive influence. Yeah, for sure. One of the things that's been really interesting to me, as I've studied this, because then the question becomes, how do we go about vertically developing? Because we've sort of laid this out, but it's like, there's somebody listening, okay, Ryan, I want to be a mind three vertical developed leader. Tell me where I get my software my operating system upgrades. Yeah, so I think to answer this question at one level and we could hopefully get a chance to go a little bit deeper. But when we go back to the definition of vertical development, it's our ability to make meaning of our world in cognitively and emotionally sophisticated ways. Well, the key term in that definition is make meaning. So in order for us to elevate, we need to focus on our meaning makers. Well, what are our meaning makers, our meaning makers are our mindsets, the mental lenses that we wear that shape how we view the world around meaning makers mindsets. There you go. It was such a good alliteration. Yeah, there you go. And I think so in terms of the work that I do with organizations and what my book success mindsets is all about is helping people awaken to four different sets of mindsets so that they can think about.

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And these are fixed and growth closed in open prevention and promotion in inward and outward. So again, we can go to that episode and you break it down a lot, but that's good. Yeah, let me give you an example of those. Let's look at inward and outward mindset. So when we have an inward mindset, we see ourselves as more important than others. This causes us to see others more like objects. And so for example, this is, I think everybody's been there. So I like this example. We're driving down the road and somebody puts their blinker on and they want to merge into our lane in front of us. I don't know about you Kurt, but I've been in this position where I haven't let them in. Oh, sure. Right? Yeah. And this is interesting because what I'm saying to myself in this situation, whether I'm conscious of this or not, is my position in this lane is more important to me than it is to you. And the way that I justify this is I don't say I didn't let that person in. I say, I didn't let that car in. So when I see them as being less important than me, I have a tendency to objectify them. And this is a very defensible thing. But it's just not cognitively and emotionally sophisticated. It's much more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated to just even wonder, why are they in a hurry? What's going on in their world? That is leading them to want to get ahead in this situation and there may be nothing. It may just be that they're a jerk. But we're okay with just sitting in, I'm not sure, and that's okay. So I'm just going to let them in. Their position in this line is just important to them as it is to me. And that's just a more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated way of seeing this. And so that's kind of a surface level example of if we could help people awaken to are they inward minded or are they outward minded? Then they could get a sense of where they are and where they need to move to become more cognitively and emotionally sophisticated. So how is this connected to the meaning makers like in that scenario you're bringing meaning to the person in the car, which is humanizing them and bringing deeper meaning to it? Is that? I'm making meaning of the situation if I have this inward mindset that I am more important than them and they're an object. And as opposed to making meaning of their a person that has just as much right and need to get into this lane as I do. Okay. So this is like a tactic that one could use to make shift them into the right mindset, which hopefully helps them vertically develop. Yeah. And the reason why I chose this mindset to focus in on because I think it's one of the things that has helped me probably done the most to help me to become more like Jesus Christ than anything else. In terms of upgrading my internal operating system, and I probably have shared this example before, but it's just been really profound to me is I think for most of my adult life, I would see other people. I would make meaning of them as though they are not doing their best. And so in a way, this would play out is if I would see a homeless person on the street corner asking for assistance, I would see them as not doing their best. And if I see them as not doing their best, I'm really quick to become critical of them. Why in the world are you asking me for my hard ear money when you're just standing there? Maybe go do something more productive with your like, go get a job. That was me. Is that very savior like? No. No, right? But it felt justifiable. And it wasn't until I read a great book by brene Brown called rising strong and there's this fantastic chapter in there that talks about this. And she encouraged me reading it to see other people as though they are doing the best. And so the next time I pulled up to a street corner and saw

somebody standing there asking for assistance, I cognitively and intentionally said, okay, see them as though they're doing their best. And it led me to ask a question that I had never asked before, which was what in the world has happened in their life that has led them to believe this is the best way to live. And immediately upon asking that question, I grew empathetic. And this felt really weird to me 'cause I like my heart literally dropped. Like, it kind of broke for that person. What did they been through? And I had never seen them in that light before. What I was doing in that moment with that inward mindset is I would see them and my mind would immediately say what's wrong with you. But now with the trying to take on more this outward mindset, the question wasn't what's wrong with you. It was now what has happened to you. And I feel that by seeing others in that way, I have become a much more compassionate person and I feel like I'm more like my savior. Because I believe that that's how our savior sees us. That he sees us as people and when we do dumb stuff, he doesn't ask the question what's wrong with them? He wonders, what has happened to them.

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And in fact, I think he ultimately knows what has happened to us, and it makes complete sense to us why we did what we did. Not that he agrees with it, but I get it. Yeah. He did it. And to me, this is where his arms of mercy reach out. This is the power of the atonement is that he is able to say despite your dumb decision. Some of the reason why you did this? Why outside of your control? And I happen to give up my life so that you don't have to pay the consequence for that. You know, this is what I've thought about this a lot in the context of acceptance to me that one of the greatest miracles of what makes the atonement of Jesus Christ so powerful is this concept that no matter who we are and what we've done, he fully accepts us in the exact place that we are at. And it really is how you've unpacked this that he understands why we've made every decision why we are weak and because of that full understanding of who we are, he accepts us fully right where we are, and then the miracle, there's a great quote by Carl Rogers of I don't have a verbatim, but in the moment I realize the moment that I fully accept myself is when I can begin to change. And with the savior, the moment we realize that he fully accepts us for who we are, then we begin to change, then that operating system begins to level up. Because what we're actually doing, and this is where to me it's so profound and deep is when we take that on we are actually healing from our own past from our own trauma, some of which we may not have been in control over. And many of us hold shame over some of those things. And when we see him except us, we're starting to heal from that trauma. And so the thing that's unique is when we talk about trauma, is it's connected to our stress response system, our nervous system, and to me, one of the examples of the savior that I think is amazing is when he's out at sea and it's these stormy sea and he's sleeping. He's got a nervous system that is like a rock, right? Is he's not stressed out over this. And in fact, he's kind of an all of his, you know, the apostles are stressing out, and he's essentially like, why don't you guys stress him out? You guys are freaking out over something that you don't need to freak out over. That's an operating system. And it is part of central nervous system. And his is such to the degree to which something doesn't something small. And I'm not saying this you've already something big doesn't set him off. When he's in church, if he's sitting in our sacrament meetings or in our

Sunday school, and somebody says some off the wall comment, he doesn't stand up and this is I don't agree with this. He is able to be mindful to be present. He doesn't do that. I don't imagine him having this knee jerk reaction. Let me set them straight. I imagine him being the one who after class goes around and puts his arm over that person and says, limping better understand where you're coming from. Yeah. We're here to meet some time to draw on the dirt. Yeah. Because it's so centered. He's just present in there for that person. Yeah. And so part of us vertically developing is really getting our central nervous system and our stress response system under control. And the thing about when we've most of us I mean, statistically have been through trauma that is inhibited our stress response system that has made us a little bit more reactive and a little less mindful than what we should. And so this is where practices like meditation come in. Meditation has been proven to be one of the best ways to elevate and improve our stress response system. So that our window of tolerance isn't really small, but something small doesn't set us off. Doesn't trigger us. And we're able to win when somebody says something that we might disagree with at church, we don't get all up in arms and get defensive. We are able to sit back and what about this might actually be helpful for me to understand that I have an explored before. Yeah. You know, I have a maybe a perfect example for this or an application of this is when I say that the Sunday school answer. An answer comes to mind for you. So let's say you're in a Sunday school class and someone says, the most simple of questions is how do we show faith in Jesus Christ? And what do people generally default to? Pray, read your scriptures and go to some people call it the seminary answer, right? And it's typically around action or checklists are doing something. I've written a little bit about this, but in my mind, there's a new Sunday school answer that really ties into this perfectly. In order to show faith in Jesus Christ, the first step before you can do anything is you have to get to a place where you feel 100% accepted by the savior Jesus Christ. If you don't have that acceptance, any action you do will only be in the effort of trying to earn some type of acceptance or love from the savior. But it is not until you have that acceptance that you can then move forward and actually upgrade your operating system.

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It starts with that acceptance and the grace of Jesus Christ before any action or doing can do anything. Yeah, I don't know about you Kurt. I feel like I've seen a lot of people in the church. That really beat themselves up over stuff that they've done. It doesn't take long for a bishop to it's to see that in his office where it's like, wow. You are really your worst enemy and a lot of these scenarios. And it's almost like when we're there. And I think I've been there. I think most people have been there because it's a human level of cognitive and emotional sophistication, but we it's almost like we are keeping score that it's about tallies, our wins and our losses in a way. And that, to me, that's the beauty of just what you're talking about with this idea is acceptance is crisis isn't keeping. I don't think he's keeping score. Because he understands us perfectly. I mean, the reality is, and in fact, research backs it up that like trauma that we experience within the first two months of our life have life-changing effects on us. Even prenatal trauma, like if our if our mother was while she was pregnant, did drugs or alcohol or was abused, then that child is, I think it's like 20 times more likely to get addicted to drugs. And we

like to think that our dare programs in school or what we talk about in churches say no to drugs that that subconscious decision. No, it's something that is actually related to our neural process. And some of which we had no control over. And so when we say for people to repent, and this is the other thing that I love about this concept of vertical development. When we're helping people repent, really what we're doing, so help them changing their hearts. We're helping them change how they're making meaning of their world. We're elevating how they make meaning. Long before they make change their behavior. That's typically where we start. All right, while the Internet filtered. Let's focus on the behavior rather than the heart. And so I hope that I guess it's my hope in that we have this conversation and we're throwing out this new concept of vertical development. I just kind of hope I'm hoping that people can see that vertical development is different than our typical approaches in the church. And then it's more aligned with the purpose of the gospel, which is becoming more and more like our savior. And if we could start having more conversations about what vertical development is and how we go about vertical vertically developing, then I think we're in better position to create circumstances within our church that facilitate this. Because I think if people largely are going to vertically develop as members of the church, they kind of have to do it on their own time period. They actually are doing it outside a church. But what if we can help people do it within church? And I think that would be a pretty profound experience. Yeah, I love that. This is what I'm learning. As we go through them, taking notes as far as I know people are listening, just give me a checklist. Tell me what to do. I want to upgrade my operating system. There we are in that mind one. But nonetheless, here's some places to start, that come to mind. One is just getting to a place of realizing that you are fully accepted by Jesus Christ right now. Not like if down the road, once you finally get that recommend, right now, you're fully accepted. Now if that, that may be more difficult for some than others, because maybe some have experienced trauma. And so that's where maybe a good therapist comes in into account of saying, you know, I'm going to go address this. I kept it buried. I know it's there, but actually the episode previous to this will talk a lot about therapy and this concept of trauma and how Christ heals trauma through therapy. That maybe you need to maybe that's a place to start. I'm just going to go see someone. I feel pretty life is manageable. I'm going to go sit down and see if I can articulate what this pain is. And then simple things like mindfulness, meditation. This is something I just last Sunday I did this where a lot of times even, you know, I'm such a busy body and I probably have some level of ADD. And so I'm always just like, I'm busy doing stuff. I want to okay, come follow me. I said, let's open the section. Here we go. I'm going to watch this YouTube video or whatever. But last Sunday, I told myself, you know, I want to really concentrate my Sabbath to God and sometimes I'm like, well today, what it means for the Sabbath is I still listen to podcasts, but I listen to spiritual podcasts. So here we go, you know, but I'm like, I want to do something different. So I woke up early. I'm usually the first person in my house awake, and I went down to my kitchen and I just sat at my kitchen table. And that's it. And I told myself, I'm just going to sit here for 30 minutes. I'll be screaming at sight. I know I will. But it wasn't even like I'm going to meditate for 30 minutes. I'm like, I'm just going to sit here and invite the lord into my Sabbath. And I don't know what that means and I don't know if a vision is going to open up. It didn't. But nonetheless, I was just there and there was a good level of acceptance of just like, I'm doing nothing because I want to connect with God. And it was a great experience. Again, it was life-changing. But it's something I'll probably

do again. Yeah. So any other places to start as far as upgrading that you haven't talked about already? No, I would just echo the things that you've said.

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Maybe let me point people to maybe a few resources or books that they might like. So I think Brene Brown's work around being accepted feeling accepted by the savior, so all of our work is about overcoming shame, shame is something that we all carry around. And in fact, I think when people in the church shut down the ideas of others, I think it's rooted in shame and trauma and things related to that. I've gotten to the point where I used to get a little bit upset with people when they would shut down the ideas of others, and now I'm to the point where, oh, not what's wrong with you. What happened to you? And in fact, that's kind of my next suggestion is a book that I found incredibly profound is a book, I'm spacing the first author's name. I think it's Bruce Johnson. I could be wrong, and Oprah Winfrey teamed together to write a book called What Happened to You. And it's all about the role that trauma plays and how we could go about healing from trauma. And if somebody wants to dive even deeper in trauma and to learn more about therapy and other different therapy modalities that can help people repair from trauma and really heal their minds. And that's really the purpose of the gospel and the purpose of vertical development at the end of the day is about healing. The other book is called The Body Keeps the Score. And that's been a really profound and deep book. So those are a couple of really good resources. Another one that is around inward and outward mindsets is The Bonds That Make Us Free. It's written by Terry Warner and that one will rock your world. If you thought you were a good person, you read that book, you'll realize that you're not as good of a person as you can, at least that was my experience. All in a good way. All in a good way. Of course I could beat myself up. But it really pushed me and it's at the central heart of that book is about charity and having the Christ-like charity that we need and it's not easy to get there. Yeah. Love that. Awesome. I get a lot of books to look up here. Have we covered it all? Yeah, it's pretty good. I just hope this is a start of a discussion for people who are listening to this to dive into it. And I even maybe hopefully between me and you Curt is a start of a discussion and as I continue working this on this book and I think going to come out X number next summer, maybe we'll have some more thoughts as I continue to think about some of these things and try to make connections between these concepts and the gospel of the purpose of the gospel and how we can help other people better live the gospel become more like our savior. If anybody wants to connect or even on a professional level and check out what you do, where would you send them? Yeah, my website, Ryan Goffert, and dot com or probably next best place would be LinkedIn or on Facebook as well, but I'm just not as active there. Yeah. So just finish off with just any final encouragement you've given to someone who's maybe excited about this concept and wants to see vertical development in their life. Yeah, I think at the end of the day, the thing that I keep coming back to is, while I apply it in a business arena, I work with business leaders all the time where we see statistics like 65% of employees say it was 75% of employees say that their leader is the most stressful part of their job. Now I don't know any leader that wakes up in the morning and says, oh, I really want to lay on the stress for my employees. It just so happens that they're probably in a mind level one point or mine level two that leads them to engage in

behaviors that feel good to them, but are actually detrimental. And so all of this is connected back to really the wiring in our brain and probably some past trauma that they've experienced, and they're just sitting at a vertical development level that isn't setting them up for being their most ideal self or their potential best. And at the end of the day, even when I work with business leaders, all of this is about healing, healing our mind and healing our hearts and the connection between the two is our central nervous system. So to me, this is a really meaningful and profound way of approaching other people, whether it's in a spiritual setting or in a professional setting and to me, I think I would like to think it's something that everybody would like to gravitate towards. 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.org](http://leading-saints.org) or go to [leading-saints.org/contact](http://leading-saints.org/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.org/contact](http://leading-saints.org/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 one only true and living church upon the face of the earth.

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We were immediately put in a position of loneliness. The loneliness of leadership from which we can not shrink nor run away. And of which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.