



Principles of Leadership | An Interview with Elder J. Devn Cornish

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Leading saints is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping Latter day Saints be better prepared to lead. To see a full scope of the leading saints content visit leading-saints.org and check out more episodes of this podcast. Written articles about leadership for Latter day Saints, and even the many topic focused libraries. A great place to start would be the liberating saints library where you'll find 25 plus interviews related to helping individuals overcome struggles with pornography. Simply text the word lead to four 747 four 7 and will reply back with a link for easy access. I always enjoy interviewing emeritus general authorities or release general officers of the church. They have such a unique perspective serving in these callings, where they have seen the church function in so many places around the world. I recently sent a random message through Facebook Messenger to elder J Devon Cornish. I didn't think he would receive it let alone reply to it. Imagine my surprise when he did reply to my message and agreed to allow me to conduct an interview with him for the leading saints podcast. I was also pleased to have Dan Duckworth joined me as co host for this interview. Den is a former guest to the podcast and a member of the leading saints board of directors. Now a little background on elder Cornish. Aller Jay Devon Cornish is an emeritus member of the first corps of the 70. He was sustained as a general authority 70 on April 2nd, 2011, and granted a merit of status on October 2nd, 2021. A newborn intensive care physician, he was a professor, chairman and later vice chairman of the department of pediatrics at Emory university school of medicine. He was also president and chief executive officer of the pediatric practice plan at Emory healthcare. In the church elder Cornish has served in numerous callings including full-time missionary in the Guatemala El Salvador mission, bishop, steak president, area 70 and president of the Dominican Republic, Santiago mission from 2003 to 2006. During his tenure as a general

authority elder Cornish served as a counselor and as president of the Caribbean area, headquartered in the Dominican Republic, as a counselor in the North American Southwest area pregnancy, and as an assistant executive director of the church history department and of the correlation department, among other assignments at church headquarters. Elder Cornish and his wife Elaine are the parents of 6 children and 32 grandchildren. Elaine Cornish passed away from cancer in June of 2019. Eller Cornish married Roseanne Brown in May of 2021 and they live in Salt Lake City, Utah. Today I'm in Salt Lake City, Utah in the home of elder Cornish, are you? I'm fine and healthy and happy how are you? Very good. I'm grateful for this opportunity, and we also have a board of directors, Dan Duckworth here, who's listening in and maybe we'll help with some questions, right? Yeah, I'm excited to be here. Thanks. Awesome. Elder recently, I don't know what the correct term released. Meredith status from the first corner of the 70. How long were you serving in that role? Well, I was an area 70. Twice actually beginning in 1999. And then was called as general authority in 2011. Released in 2021. Wow. And as those calls come, it's just you know that that's just what you're going to do until you're 70. You generally speaking, right? The 70 service 70 70. Nice. Nice. And maybe just give us a little bit of your background as far as early upbringing and then maybe what led to your first leadership role that you can remember. Well, born in Salt Lake City, just near the rose park area. They're till I was ten. We decided we were Farmington then because they ran I 15 through our kitchen. I was called as a deacon square and president when I was 12 or 13. And grew up in Georgia from age 13 when we moved from Farmington and had many leadership opportunities in the church because in the mission field in those days, they weren't all that many members, and so everyone contributed one way or another. And had experienced it like everyone else, I think, serving in the church and speaking in meetings, they had a wonderful leadership training that's intrinsic to later they seemed experiences. I served a mission in Guatemala and El Salvador and had an opportunity there. I've had a number of opportunities in medicine to be in leadership positions. I was a more intensive care physician, but spent my entire career in medical schools. And so I had some administrative leadership responsibilities there was ultimately the chairman of the department of pediatrics at Emory university school of medicine in Atlanta and the president and chief executive officer of the medical practice plan, which was a fairly large multi-million dollar pediatric practice.

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Have served in the church in roster leadership position there is that a guy can serve in. I've never been really society president. But I'm a bishop three times in the state prison in area 70 twice in a mission president and general authority. So I have sat across the desk and in the living rooms with many, many wonderful people trying to encourage them as they strive to live with the challenges of life and follow Christ. And you've prepared some awesome points that we'll get into as far as various leadership principles or points that with hindsight look back and see that was maybe most helpful for you. I'm curious, was it the first time called as bishop? Was that maybe the first heavy heavy leadership calling that you experienced in the church? No, I think the first heavy responsibility was this an elder square president in inner city Baltimore. Oh, wow. During medical school, that was the learning experience, 152 families in the inner city. Nice. How would you describe that experience? Well, that was an introduction to several key principles, like the fact that if you are concerned with the church, you're complaining about the

church. You need to realize that you are the church. And that if you're hoping for someone to solve some problem in the church, get a mirror. Does the person who is likely to need to solve the problem is probably you. Yeah. Yeah. In Baltimore, as far as like, how did that manifest as in your role as eligible and president? Were there some dynamic approaches yet to take for a unique area? Whole lot of wonderful people. But many poor people in the inner city who were good faithful Latter day Saints, but having significant challenges in their lives. Many of the people in our quorum were graduate students. Going to one professional school in Baltimore another with very tight schedules and tight finances. There were a number of established families established couples so the dynamic across demographics across socioeconomics across educational Strata led us all to realizing that we were in that together and that no one was less responsible for helping other people than any other. This principle you brought up of look in the mirror, let's call it the look in the mirror principle. It's such a provocative idea and I'm wondering about those in the church who feel like the church is a very structured, hierarchical role based organization, they might feel these complaints or they wish things would be different, but they don't have that sense of courage or license to solve a problem that they see because they don't feel like they're in a position to do that. What is your thoughts for them? There are two principles that I think help a lot. The first is that problems have an origin. They have roots. And they grew up in manifest themselves, ultimately as good or bad fruit. But batting at the leaves of problems or even liking or not liking the fruit rarely makes anything different. You have to get to the roots. Most problems are solved closest to their roots by the people in the problems. When I was serving in the Caribbean area, presidency, out of Santa Domingo, the demand actually public. We worked and worked to develop an area plan under the direction of the 12 men the presence of the 70. Our original plan was 52 pages long. I encouraged to get it down to a few pages. Ultimately, we got it down to two words. The Caribbean area plan was responsible and converted. In that order, it turns out that whatever someone is wrestling with until they accept that they are responsible for their financial their health, their emotional their relationship, their spiritual well-being, no one else can help them very much. The second principle is that we really came to earth fundamentally to be changed in our natures so we can go home to live with God and belong there because we're like him. Like Jesus Christ. But you can't become converted until your first responsible. You have to first say I am responsible for my conversion. When a person is converted and has learned to be responsible, they bless other people, and they become stable and happy themselves. But unless you're responsible and converted, you're not much help to others, and you're not easy for others to help. But I think I hear you saying there is often times when we complain about the way things are, we're looking to the church to change. And you're kind of saying first, look at yourself. There are things you can do to take responsibility for your experience, whether it's in the church or in life with your finances with your health, with your spirituality, there are things you can do to own your own experience and become converted. And then the other issues that you might have had, they might actually not become or be issues anymore at that point. You know, the gospel is so simple.

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It's really just two things. The savior already worked out the immortality part of God's purposes. The internal life part has really only two key components. For me to be changed in my heart, sanctified her meat we seal in my generations. Saint divine and sealed. That's the whole class.

Well, there actually is a third part. To help other people become sanctified and sealed. Yeah, I did the same process. That's all there is. Yeah. I want to just one more thing that other corners brought up here that I think is useful for our audience. The idea that as an area presidency, you did so much thinking that you could develop a 52 page document. But then you continued to do so much thinking that you could reduce that to two meaningful words or mantras. I think that's an incredible lesson in and of itself. Yeah. You know, this is the famous quote from the American jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes, who is reported to have said that he would give nothing for the simplicity on this side of complexity, but that he would give his life for the simplicity on the other side, a complexity. Yeah. I love that. That's powerful. And was that the typical process with different area plans you're evolved in. They're just started really bloated, and then you had to skim them down. Well, part of it depended on what they wanted. How many financial plans and how many building projects and how many specific demographic statistics did they want? Yeah. But they came to ask for those in a different format and ask for the area plan to be something for the members. So the format team. And I'm curious, I tend to go on these tangents. But being in a state presidency and being handed this area plan, according to council, and sort of this feeling of like, all right, here it is, but I didn't witness the development of it and so it's sort of hard to maybe digest it in the moment, or sit with it. What general vice would you give when it comes to area plans for leaders and in specific areas? And let's not talk just about area plans at about plans for stakes and wards. Forums and classes and families and businesses and mega corporations and international operations. The process is the same. The question is, what is your purpose? What is your process? How are your people and what are your fundamental principles? If you're clear about what your process, your purpose is, if you're clear about what processes are appropriate, you know who the people are. You must know your people. And then you apply the principles in consistent, credible, defensible ways, add a little creativity, a little prayer, a whole lot of counseling together, you're likely to succeed. Yeah. Yeah, that's really helpful. I'm curious, you know, not a lot of people get the opportunity to serve as bishop once, and you have the opportunity to three times I assume with a lot of your traveling with medical school and medical practice and whatnot. That was just the nature of your experience. But what have you learned about that role as bishop being in that role three times? Well, there's some fundamental principles about leadership that may be useful to mention. I'm going to name 6, so we can talk about them in any order or not at all, but I think that there are 6 key principles that have stood out to me. And that goes not only for leadership in the church, but maybe leadership in a corporate setting in an academic setting. The first principle is keep the wheels on and the train's running. Particularly when you become a new leader. The second principle is, don't do dumb things. I love it. The third principle is, it's not about you. The fourth principle is, take care of your people. The 5th is mind the dollars, which applies even in the church. And finally, is nurture, purpose and joy. So, those are key things I've learned that are set out to me. Awesome. Is it useful to talk about it? Yeah, let's jump into number one here. Keep the wheels on and the trains running. You know, we perpetuate the image of the ideal leader. As one who's bold, creative, innovative and charismatic. This moves nearly appointed leaders to completely overhaul the leadership team or to reassess the fundamental mission and purposes of the organization to change the core policies and procedures. Rarely, is it appropriate to make any substantive changes in an organization for the first few months? It may be much wider to spend those initial months encouraging your people. Endorsing the institution its purposes and praising

their performance and their products. Learn who everyone respects. Who builds unity among the people, and who makes sure that things get done right. By the way, those people are often not in leadership positions. Sometimes it's the secretaries. Invite corrections and suggestions including about yourself as a leader. Keep the organization moving forward while you learn the ropes. Value the successes and learn from the failures or predecessors. Before you start making a lot of changes, it just isn't possible that everyone was doing everything wrong all the time before you came along. I love that.

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If I could ask a follow-up question, one of the things that's most provocative in there to me is this idea getting to know the people and spending even an inordinate amount of time of getting to know them and you mentioned that you said, you know, you said purpose process, principles, but when you talked about people earlier, you really emphasize that. What does that look like for a newly called elders quorum president, relief society president, bishopric member? What does it look like to really get to know their people? Let me jump to this concept of taking care of your people in general. Awesome. You'll never really have their hearts. If they don't believe you've got their backs. So know your people. Learn and remember their names, and as much about them as you can as quickly as you can. If you can, print out a photo directory and spend time memorizing their names and faces and call them by name. Establish salary and promotion policies that are transparent fair and motivating in unemployed setting. And then try to find ways to help everyone meet their targets. If each of your employees is succeeding individually, they'll see to it that your enterprise succeeds collectively. This is especially true in the church where it's not an employed setting. But it's not enough for a person to accept a calling. The organization head who supports them, and the bishop himself should watch carefully to make sure that all that needed support is provided so the person thrives in the calling and enjoys it. If each person who serves finds joy and fulfillment in their service, the word will run well. Turn over in colleagues will be minimal. There will be a feeling of shared purpose and progress among the members. This is especially important for the less active. The needing, those with challenges in their lives. And those who feel excluded, they have to be closely ministered to and nurtured. Now, the problem is that when you stand up and talk at a second meeting, you're talking to people who came to Sacramento. Yeah. So we preached how to improve yourself to the people who need least to improve themselves. It's not just that we preach to the choir. We almost only preach to the choir. A great key to doing though that though is that it needs to be done in such a way that it doesn't consume the bishop. If that attentive minister is done at the levels closest to the person, meaning their family members, their ministering brothers and sisters, and organization leaders. Many more people get involved and blessed, and a feeling of love and unity will permeate the word. Everyone feel like they matter because they see that everybody else matters too. It's been wisely said that the key to the 99 is the one when the people in the ward invest their energy and love and the people who most commonly get sidelined. Who are feeling like they're on the outside putting in. It doesn't just strengthen those sidelined people. It strengthens everybody else, because when they see how much you care about those outliers, they say, oh, the bishop must care about me too. Yeah. Yeah. No, that's really helpful. And I just a few weeks ago, I had a brand new bishop reach out to me and brand new called bishop. You're just looking to everybody for any advice as you step into this role. And that's sort of

where I went with the advice is if you can help each individual in your ward have a personal interaction with their bishop as soon as possible, so they feel like, hey, he knows me, like he knows my name, he's talked with me, that can go a long way and especially in the context. I love that that emphasis on inactives. You know, in reaching out to them and is there any tactic or approach that you use to reach out to inactive is simply being intentional about visits or what else? Well, that's a really insightful and informed question. You obviously have been around the block of your time. This is under the principle that I called it's not about you. It's hard to be a loyal follower of a bishop or any leader, if you can't respect and trust them. And it's hard to trust someone who's primarily in it for his own glory. You have to be sufficiently expert in the business or knowledge all about the organization and so deeply committed to its purpose and so genuinely transparently altruistic. You really do care about other people, that the people dare to risk their livelihoods in an employment setting in their careers, or in the church risk their faith on following your leadership. If you are a transparently and genuinely concerned about other people, it really doesn't matter what else you do right. They're just holding their breath until you're released. That is if I might ask a follow-up question there, that is such a compelling phrase genuinely and transparently altruistic. So I get the principle of it's not about you. It's about them. And so that's the altruistic part of it. And of course, it's got to be real. It's got to be genuine, but tell us more about what you mean by that word transparently altruistic. I've come to conclude that in settings of leadership, where your goal is to improve the people and the organization, the real approach comes down to two things.

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The only credible motivation is love. Real love. And the only effective method is ministry. We think administering the church as a program. It isn't. It's the gospel. Yeah. When you ask, what is the gospel of Christ? And look at his life. It's ministry. In leadership application, the message is be slow to take credit. Never do things just to get credit not ever if you find you're doing something, so someone will see you do it. I intentionally don't do that. Even if it kind of needs to be done. Yeah, yeah. Clarify early on that in any discussion or negotiation it does not matter who is right. It only matters that we do right. I've used that phrase in the corporate setting, countless times. And then you find that sometimes the right and moral thing to do is not what seems to be best to do for the business. But do it anyway. And do it always and do it so predictably that your leaders will know that they're always safe if they choose the moral high ground. Then on the long run, whether you're ever succeed or fail, all of you will be able to feel good about your efforts and feel comfortable in your own skins. The savior said, why shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own salt? You can do that in business, but you can do it in a ward too. If the elders come president, it's just out to be seen so that they'll call them into the bishopric. No one's going to trust and believe him. And they shouldn't. I once worked close to closely with the leader of a large organization who graduated from the best schools and was talented, articulate and impressive. There was pretty clear to a lot of people that his prominence and success were what mattered to him most. Whenever there was an event or an interview, he was up front and center stage. In the end, things went badly, and he was allowed to seek a position elsewhere. His leadership tenuous pretty much a sad and painful time for all of us. Yeah. Yeah, and I'm curious in the church context. There's this wrestle of I've been called as the elder scorn president with all this responsibility. I want to make sure I do a

good job and here's the bishop. I'm going to make sure I communicate to him maybe not directly through words that I'm doing a good job. I'm a good soldier, right? Where does it go wrong there? And I'm sure as you visit a different stakes, maybe you've seen that. I don't know if this story comes to mind or anything like that. Well, I think that there are some questions that are helpful to ask yourself. The first question is, who's talking the most? If I'm responsible to teach a class or told an interview, if I'm talking to somebody in the hallway, I find it a very helpful question to ask myself who's doing most of the talking here. Now sometimes you're explaining a process and you have to tell them. Yeah. Because they need the information. But most of the time, you're thinking to you, then you're counseling together and what you're after isn't technical process, proficiency. You have to change of heart and behavior. And if you're talking most, you're learning most. And so I ask myself, who's talking most here? Because, frankly, if I'm doing most of the talking, then it's mostly about me. And that should send off alarms in my head. And it does. The second question is, are we talking about the real problem? Are we talking about the comfortable problem? Almost never. Does someone seek out their bishop where they really society president or even their ministering sister and tell them what the real problem is first. You test the waters. You touch comfortable. Trust them. And so you throw out a teaser problem. And if the person latches onto that and runs with it, you don't ever get to the real problem. Because they are performing. They're grandstanding. And if the person says, well, you know, that's an interesting problem. You've obviously thought a good deal about this. What have you thought about it so far? And the one who raised the problem dispenses with it pretty quickly because they have thought about it. And they're ready to go into a little deeper problem because to their surprise, they were listened to. They were respected. Their opinion was valued. And before long without attempt to, you know, what I really need to ask you about is, and then here the real problem. Now bishops can't have interviews that last forever. Yeah. And I certainly meant hours, I probably didn't need to spend helping people when I probably was helping mostly myself. Sometimes it's appropriate for bishop to say. Brother, I'm so grateful that we have some time together. If this conversation served you the best it could, what would the outcome be? What would you like to see come from our time together? And if you throws you an easy problem, you say, I think that's an important thing for us to discuss is there anything else? What would you like the result of our conversation to be so that you and the people you care about are best blessed? And often that allows you to both respect them and show them love, but also to get to the real issue earlier on in the conversation.

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So the interviews aren't quite as long. Otherwise we were at our leaders. Yeah. That's easy to do it. This is true in business too, by the way. People seek out the boss, and they give you the softball first. And they may leave unsatisfied and even angry because you didn't listen to them. But the fact is you were listening, but you were listening to what they said not what they meant. Yeah, I like to say sometimes we're listening with the wrong ears. If we put on our other ears and we were listening for what they weren't saying, then we could ask those follow-up questions. I want to ask you this question from another angle. So oftentimes we do get leaders in the church or business that are grandstanding for sure. And so that's why they miss the point or they have the wrong set of ears on in these conversations, but sometimes it is really well intentioned. They really want to help and yet there's also a little bit of the ego wrapped in there

that they don't want this to break on their watch. They're kind of like the Doctor Who has a patient in the office and how do you know when to send that patient at home and say, take your vitamins and see me next week versus, hey, this is a serious problem and I can't leave you alone right now. That's such an astute question. And this is under the heading of what I call don't do dumb things. Perfect. I'm glad I'm the one that asked that question right then. When I was a mission president, our scripture for the mission of this 35 5 13, I'm a disciple. But our second scripture was Jacob 6 12, which says oblige what work can I say? My wife and I translated that too, don't do dumb things. Occasionally missionary would do something in my life and turn to me and say, looks like a Jacob 6 12 violation to me. I've had a lot to do with helping to develop a new dangerous invasive and challenging treatment for intensive care patients. We're dying from lung and or heart failure called ECMO, which stands for extracorporeal membrane oxygenation. It requires its long-term heart and lung bypass. It requires constant attention to a team of highly trained medical professionals. And it allows for very few if any mistakes. If the doctor begins to act like he or she is the all knowing boss, who manages and controls everything in that process, it's likely not to go well. So in ECMO, one of our rules was, any Doctor Who thinks he can do ECMO alone deserves to. Because it would crash immediately when the other people lead you to yourself. I think the same thing is true about leaving any organization. Don't try to be a one man show. Even if you can, and be sure you recognize your coworkers, contributions, publicly and often. You know, sometimes you come across a bishop or a stake president to think you can read it all. And the worst thing that can happen in order to stake is when he's right. When in fact, he is so talented and so committed and so energetic that he probably can do it all. And that's the quickest way to kill a stake reward. Because the lord doesn't need the stake president to do it all. The lord does not look for a man who can do the work of ten people. He looks for a man who can get ten people to work. Yeah. So if you want to keep costly mistakes and missteps to minimum, make sure that the people are organized with as much authority and autonomy as possible, delegated to the lowest levels, and the incentives are in place to recognize and reward them. That includes the emotional and spiritual incentives in the church, just as much as it includes the financial and promotion incentives in a business. We talked about the fact that most problems are best solved closest to their sources. But that's especially true in the church. So use your most senior and expert leaders as your advisers. See their formal and informal council sincerely and often. Seek advice often from any other internal and external sources you can trust. And learn as quickly as you can just who in the organization you can and can't trust the most. Above all, make you have any father your main source of guidance through frequent prayer. I think that the spot in front of my chair in my office when I was the head of the department of pediatrics weren't as anybody else because that's where I had to kneel down to learn how to run the department and run the business, as well as the church. It's been wisely said that only a fool learns from his mistakes. A wise person learns from the mistakes of others. Of course you shouldn't do things that are obviously foolish, but the real challenge is knowing before you do them, what things are going to look foolish after the fact. There are times when you have to take some risks, but if you're the only one who thinks a particular risky decision that's a good idea, don't do it. So one of the great secrets to not doing dumb things is to not go out alone. To recognize that you have limited insights and information and lean heavily and sincerely on the council of others, and then see that they get recognized publicly and frequently. Yeah. I appreciate that because what my mind went to is sometimes we

get so petrified by this idea of I don't want to do anything dumb that we then limit our innovation or seek deeper inspiration or revelation about thinking outside the box for our specific area and so we just sort of shrink and try and stay in the lines.

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But I love this advice of just making sure as you counsel about it, are you the only rogue guy that's wants to go for this idea? That's the beauty of counsels. Any other advice to help stimulate innovation while also not doing anything dumb. We have a storm here a few days ago. We're at a higher elevation and it dumped lots of ISIS no on our very steep driveway. It's a very steep driveway. My wife said, put on your extracts. The extracts are a kind of an elastic web with wire run around the strands that goes over the solar shoes. It works amazingly well, it's not an ad for the company, but there are a lot of brands that are the same thing. They're cleats that don't ruin your four in the house. That's not what they're intended for. But really give you traction out of the ice and snow. Now think about it. How much did it cost to produce those? How much graduate school did it take to invent those? That when somebody sat down in a corporate board room and said boss, I've got this incredible idea and they brought it out, showed the prototype people. I expect that everyone's sitting around that table looked at that prototype and said, they slapped their foreheads that why didn't I think of that? What a great idea. Yeah. One of the true signs of a great innovation is that response. The people around the table say, why didn't I think of that? What a great idea. When you're innovating, when you need in need of real progress, it breakthroughs. Find solutions that have that response. When you find solutions to its responses, yeah, that really sounds like a good idea boss. If you're in trouble. Yeah. That's really helpful. Then, did you have something? Yeah, so I think on this idea, don't do dumb things. Jacob four 6. I think that a lot of times our bishops are really worried that the state president will think they've done a dumb thing. And then in turn, the state presence are really worried that the area president will think they've done a dumb thing. And so they become much more conservative or risk averse in how they approach things, which leads them to really struggle with this idea of delegation and empowerment and you just talked about. So I found it fascinating that you talked about find out who you can trust and who you can't trust, which my question for you is what if you discover as a bishop or any president that your first counselor isn't somebody you can really trust with certain assignments or responsibilities. What do you do in that case? That's such an insightful question. Well, releasing, right? No, you don't. Because one of the most important things is their leaders. What you do is you treat him the way the senior treated as apostles. Isn't it fascinating to look at the 12 people to say recalled? He told Judas. He had a few he couldn't trust. At least at the time. Well, more precisely, he had Mötley Crüe, a diverse people with strikingly different backgrounds. Matthew, the extremely well educated publican. One of the most despised people in the entire society who wrote the gospel that has the depth of Old Testament and scriptural references that could persuade the Jews that doctrinally Christ met all the prophecies fulfilled all of the requirements. But Matthew was not the person to be the church. Peter, the impetuous fishermen, who knew the people who knew the society understood how they thought, and how they made their livings had the depth of conversion in the power of personality to make things happen. So you treat your first counselor by saying to yourself honestly, what things does he really do well? What strengths do I need to lean on? And in what areas does he need counsel and maybe a little correction? It's been

encouragement, but the savior leads by leaning on our strengths and helping us with our weaknesses. If the lord only leaned on the people he could fully trust. None of us would be in the church. Yeah. So count on people's strengths and help them to strengthen their weaknesses. And include at every level as many people as possible by counting on their strengths and minimizing what I love and how you describe that because oftentimes you might feel a little isolated if the lord has given you counselors that you learn through experience, their strengths aren't necessarily always the strengths that you need.

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But in what you described in your description of this principle, was that there are others that may not actually even be called in those positions that can still advise you that you can still look to you can still lean on them as you're not giving up on your the people who have been called to serve with you. I was in a senior leadership position with those kinds of people surrounding me with various strengths and weaknesses. And there was an old high priest who had been and there were positions was a little rough in his manners, but absolutely committed converted and trustworthy. And I could go to him and say, okay, what's really going on here? What am I missing? What do you recommend and get good counsel? When I was in business leadership, I had a few secretaries who had been there a long time who understood the organization and this principles of its people and who behind the scenes often working MP 8 hours after the day was over. Kept things running and made things sure things were done right. When I began to figure out who those people were, I'd seek them on. Okay, Leslie. What's really going on here? What am I missing? What do you suggest? And they always endured. Oh, boss, I can. I don't want to criticize anyone to name names. I don't want to get anybody, I'd say cut the slack. What do you suggest? And they would give me wise and effective counsel every time. Yeah, those are really valuable people to have to get to the point of it. Yeah, I've had that experience. You've been working with the youth in the church. You can find those young people who seem to have a comprehension of the social systems and the dynamics that are going on and even though they might seem inexperienced in life in general. You can go to them and say, help me understand what's really happening here. Because on this old guy that's disconnected from this. Probably what to do here. They'll say, do you really want to know? Yeah, and then even they feel more like they feel heard. They feel like, well, my opinion counts here and they want to be more involved. And they say to him, go back and keep working on the problem for your end, you're making great contributions. Yeah. What other principle have we not dove into yet on your list of 6 here? Well, we haven't talked about minding the dollars. Awesome. This is something that we don't talk about in the church, but we talk about in business, but you don't always talk about it well. This is true even if you're working in a not for profit. If the dollars go badly, your leadership ten year will be short and sad, period. If you're a business, find ways to regularly channel at least some of your financial success back to your employees. Financial rewards and the message that you care about them and their families. That's not lost on them. In the church financial mismanagement leaves the spiritual danger. Rarely do leaders get into financial difficulties intentionally. So get really capable people to manage these matters, see that everyone follows the established protocols and observe all the checks and balances, even if you think they're trivial or unnecessary. And yes, I could cite examples. But I think it would otherwise be sufficient. Yeah, that's really helpful. And I'm curious, you know, I was a bishop in the inner

city in south Salt Lake with a heavy welfare responsibility there. From your experience as a general authority, any advice or perspective you could give on mine the dollars when it comes to fast offerings and helping the poor needy? Yes. It's sad but true that in your most sincere and loving attempts to help people, you often make their situations worse. One of the words most of the Caribbean was entitlement. Many of the very poor people in very poor places are regularly recipients of help from other places. And they come to depend on it. They can expect it. They come to believe they deserve it, which absolutely abolishes any incentive, any personal development of progress on their parts. Sadly, there are people who believe they were meant to be poor. There are people who believe they are meant to be unimportant. And they come to believe that other people were meant to take care of them. That absolutely paralyzes both parties. The help keeps them from growing and the helper comes away feeling like he's better than they are. He's smarter. And he's not in their position because they really are a lesser people. So the helper comes away damaged spiritually and the helped person comes away from damaged spiritually. So you help people to help themselves. They're a few key questions here. Number one is this a relief situation or is this a development situation? You know, I'm from the south where we just expect between June and December to carve out a few weekends where we'll get there SUVs with our friends and our chain saws and go help get trees out of people's roofs after they've been hit by hurricanes.

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You don't stop and check a temple recommend when you get a tree out of somebody's roof. You don't even care. You just help. Right. And he released situations. That's what you do. But the more common situation is the development situation. Where you're trying to help someone grow and learn and become independent. And so you have to ask some questions like, how much responsibility does this person have for getting results in this situation? Because until they become responsible, nothing else you do is going to lead to long-term change. Are you doing it for them, something that they can and should do for themselves? In which case, you should not do it, or you should do it together. Are you increasing their capacity to help themselves? This is something that he did so marvelously. Do you think any situations in the sketches were all the people who were asking alms, begging in the streets, commonplace in Jesus era? Every God help from Jesus. You can't think of a single time in the scriptures where he gave something to a beg. I can't find a single one. Well, that's interesting. Yeah. But what he did do is heal people, because often the people who were begging the streets were lame or blind, or otherwise disabled. And heal them so that he could increase their capacity to care for themselves. In other words, generally give us the gift of healing people so that their problems go away. But most of the time that would not heal them it would only make them healthy. Yeah. The healing is a fundamental self esteem, courage and capacity issue. We can deal with those. If we follow the savings example about how to help the poor, we will find the most of the time what we're doing is helping them to help themselves. Yeah. And I love that concept be really enabling them in a positive way and sitting with that question. How do I enable this person to actually heal what they're dealing with to some extent? Be careful about the secret Santa. You may well leave that person feeling like they are less they are the recipients. They are looked down on and you may well need the people who helped feeling like people who are better or richer or smarter. In both cases, false. And the approach to the help needs to be reconsidered. Yes, I'm dead. I did. I love

this topic of mind the dollars because it's not something that we talk a lot about in the church context in a business context. We talk about fiduciary responsibility. We have boards of directors or boards of governors who are responsible to make sure that the finances are well managed. We don't really have that set up in the ward or stake structure. Well, we do. We have auditing committees. We there we go. And often, the ecclesiastical leaders feel like those things are and nuisance. And then necessary, and that someone else needs to worry about it. It's not uncommon for the stakeholder to come about, come around and find out that the bishop isn't going to show up for the interview. Because he just didn't think it was important. Again, any time we fail to properly administer the defense of the church, we put ourselves in others in grave, spiritual danger. And when I hear you talking about that in the individual context, my mind immediately went towards the idea that in our ward context, it didn't used to always be this way, but for those of us these days, we just get a budget. The money just magically appears and we're almost as a collective in danger of the same spiritual peril that you described for the individual. We're entitled to this. The church owes us this money for our activity and for our social and I just came from members. I don't know what you think it came from. The churches are scrolling up in Georgia. We had a very, very small chapel. In those days we built phased buildings and we lived in a phase one chapel, a little bitty building. We wanted a bigger building. The congregation was growing. As I recall, the local congregation had raised 30% of the cost of the new building, which was millions, and we were a little poor congregation in the way we could do this. We fired the janitor, and we became the janitors. And we took the grounds and we sold lightbulbs and Christmas trees and washed cars. Interestingly, when we did those things like the car wash, it was mostly Cornish's and a few other active families and their kids who brought their cars, wash their cars, put them under the box and then dropped their cars on. I learned this is the only church where you can paid wash your own car. It's not the only one, but that was the point was exactly that. We are the church. The money of the church, the resources of the church are not so entitled to. There's something we're responsible for. Yeah, we had I was serving as a state clerk or rather, we had a newly called stake president who then called me to serve as a state clerk. And I got to watch how intensely focused he was on sound financial management and knowing where our dollars were going.

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And I don't know if you ever said this to me, but I sort of developed the perspective that he wants to do really great things with this money. And so he's being very careful about not wasting it on things that don't need to be even value added, including sometimes in some cases welfare, experiences where the money is just kind of funneling out the window here because he's saying we want to use the money we've been blessed with to create really meaningful experiences for our members. To build people, not just to maintain traditions. And the traditions is often that gravitational force that you're pushing against. This is how we've always done it, and you've got to give us that activity, because it's got decades of tradition, right? Yeah. And so go to the final one here. The final part that I thought would be useful to share is nurture purpose and joy. Even people who are well immunity will eventually begin to look for other opportunities. If they don't find deep seated meaning and joy in what they're doing, conversely people remain wholeheartedly engaged in a cause that means a lot to them, even if their salaries are low compared to the market to a certain limit of course. If you want your people to be intensely loyal

and radiantly happy, nurture frequently that sense of purpose in your shared cause, and help all you people find joy in its pursuit. In our laterally saint culture, we're very familiar with this concept from the dedicated service, we rendered our local colleagues, especially from the service and sacrifices given by a full-time missionaries and general authorities and officers. But similarly, I spent virtually my whole professional career being underpaid, and working with many highly qualified medical school positions who were also underpaid. Compared to the doctors in the community, we often worked long hours in difficult circumstances and gave our whole heart to what we were doing. Because we loved it and we believed in it. I spent a good deal of my time working at grainy memorial hospital deep in the ghetto environment of inner city Atlanta. All the doctors who worked there were medical school faculty members. And all were underpaid for what they were doing compared to the market. Their patients were poor, often seriously ill, and sometimes not easy to work with, but the doctors came back shift after shift year after year. They did it because they're in their hearts. They were missionary serving a cause. The cause of human kindness and compassion and for the most part they loved it. The median value they found in that work couldn't be replaced by larger salaries. To the degree you can frame hard work onto a compelling cause you'll win both the hearts and the backs of your people and they'll thank you for the privilege. Yeah. That's really helpful. And really, that's the core of leadership is nurturing that purpose and joy. Because everything else gets a lot easier when everybody's engaged in that purpose. There is no such thing as a job that's fun all the time. There are days when every job is tedious and maybe even little painful. But if what you're doing has meaning, if it is a someone suffering, if it makes the world a better place, you'll find going back to doing it even on the tedious and tiresome days. Yeah. Sometimes the purpose is there, but leaders don't have the insight to identify it to highlight it and make it the focus of why people come to work. That can be the difference between a great leader who gets great results and another meter in the same organization for whom nothing seems to go well. The first one focuses on purpose. The second one focuses on process. The idea a lot of teaching and coaching in leadership and we talk a lot about the difference between being a problem solver and being a purpose finder or purpose creator and that's kind of the key distinction. And I think a lot of times people who are in management responsibilities, whether that's at work or at church or even at home, they get so tied into the tasks. So you said your first principle is to keep the trains running, right? And they let that become so much the focus that they themselves have lost sight that this is meaningful work that instead they're deriving meaning from the execution of a program or keeping a tradition alive or something like that. Let me tell you a story. Love it. Three year old and a 5 year old fighting just outside the kitchen in earshot of mom for whom they're putting on this performance, by the way. Who is busy in the kitchen? Now, if I walk in that scene, I will figure out who did what to whom whose fault it is who started at UDC at punished. My wife would turn to the kids after they had about that enough and say, who wants to make brownies? Of course they want to make brownies. They immediately get engaged in that and have a wonderful time. And the truth is neither one of them could remember in the least what they were fighting about in the first place.

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Nor did they care. Because in truth, it didn't matter what they were fighting about. They were mostly fighting as they were bored. Or hungry. Or didn't get a good night's sleep. Or just didn't

feel like they were being appreciated and respected and valued in the family, the way they hoped they would be. Yeah. The truth is that every organization is loaded with problems that richly deserve not to be solved. They did not deserve our time or attention, and they don't deserve a solution. They deserve to be passed over by purpose. Okay, so let's take this to an organizational setting in the church. Let's say that a bishop has a young women's president and a group of parents who are at odds with each other and the parents think she's doing it wrong and she's wrestling with them for control of the program and they're kind of going back and forth over weeks and months. What's the brownie equivalent of stepping into that situation? Whether the bishop or not, is just an example. What's the brownie solution there? It's a great, great example. Because the question that eating up the goodwill is process. You are doing this right. You are doing this the way we've always done it. You're not doing this the way we think we should do it. If you can get back to purpose and say, what's best for these kids? What we want them to become. What kinds of experiences will help them to become that way? That allows everybody to let go of the process questions. And get back to the purpose question, and it isn't even which activity should we pursue. It's what development what kinds of beings we want these young people to become. Almost never in life is the process, the purpose. The purpose is about becoming like the savior. So we can go home to God and stay there because we belong there. And if we say it to the parents, we recognize there's been some disagreement about how we've been doing things. And we expect that there is much of wisdom and love involved in those disagreements, because you want your children to go out to be the kinds of people who are even better than we are. What kinds of understandings what kinds of insights and inspiration will they need to have to become those kinds of people? What kinds of growth and service and work experiences do you think will help them have those feelings and understandings? How can we build that into our curriculum? And how can we engage them in that design process, but for that purpose? And that allows them to let go of all the other past processes, focus on the purpose and keeps the youth. And December may be entirely different than it say is this consistent with the handbook. And it almost always will be sometimes a little tweaking, but almost always will be. It's almost like the phrase you used was this problem doesn't deserve to be solved. It doesn't deserve our time and our energy to solve it. So we don't have to get to the bottom of it. We don't have to assign blame. We can actually just redirect the conversation back to why we're all here, take us back to shared identity, shared purpose, shared values, because we all want that, whether you're the parents or the young women's leader, you all want the same thing, right? And so if you can just start making brownies with them, then all of a sudden it doesn't matter. And then a little bit of trust as well that the gospel is true and the savior's atoning power is real and it can heal and when people reconnect to purpose, they'll probably also want to reach out and apologize. This is called the fine art of changing the subject. And there's this recalibration that's happening, right? Re-engaging people on the true purpose that you talked about. What are we trying to do here? We're all in the same team rather than I'm the bishop, so I get the final vote here. This is what we're doing and just be happy with it. But that recalibration is really important. It goes back to the importance of not who is right, but that we do right. That's really helpful. All right, I just have some random questions that I always love asking former leaders from a general authorities. You've had these opportunities to speak in so many settings, especially general conference, preparing a talk, what general advice would you give to a leader who has to prepare talks a lot? I don't know that I can speak for all the general authorities, but

right now of course that's what I mean. I learned some wonderful things speaking in general conference. When I was an area 70 my goal was not to ever sit in the red seats up on the podium. Because they have to speak in general. Shortly after I was called as general authority, I got assigned to speak in the next conference. I went to all my Friends and said, how do you do this? This is awful. And I got the same answer every time. Don't worry about it. You'll think about it. You'll pray about it you'll study, you'll fast. And when the time comes to how you talk, you'll sit down, the lord of even the dark, you're right, you'll have a few people review it and you pretty much give it away the word gave it to you. But how do you stand up and give it without being more than a little nervous and friend of, you know, 20,000 people sitting right in front of you and 16 million people listening, not to mention the critics of the church, you are also listening for every comma.

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And the answer for me was, if you stand at that pulpit and you look out at that congregation and you think about all the unseen listeners and you wonder, oh my goodness is my bald spot shiny. Did I get my teeth well lost? You did. Yeah. Because it's all about you. If you look out there and say, the lord has given me some experiences and some insights might be helpful to someone. How can I magnify this opportunity, be guided by that ordinance? Those people he intended for me to be less to blast will invite me blessed. Then you're not nervous because it's not about you anymore. It doesn't matter about those other things. What matters is that through you that lord can bless those people. And I think that's a key not just to give him toxin conference. It's a leadership in general. The bishop stands up to conduct a meeting and he's saying to himself, how old were the people think of me? He's dead. If he stands up and looks out of those people and says, who does the lord want me to pass today? How can I help those people out there? Are there specific people do I can minister both in conducting this meeting and the things he inspired me during the meeting to do for people after the meeting? Then the lord will bless him and the truth is he'll have greater peace and comfort in his calling because he wants to spend time thinking about whether people like him he'll spend time thinking about how the lord wants to bless them through him. By the way, the most dangerous thing a bishop can do is to want it to be like. There's a \$1 million quote right there. We could start a whole nother interview right now. Expand on, like, what else comes to mind? There is this because these are your neighbors. These are your Friends oftentimes, it's like, I don't want to be the bad guy. Is there any more than any more buying that statement? There it is. The safest thing for a bishop to do is to realize that the lord loves his children, and that he answers to the lord. If he pleases the lord through him the lord will rest the people. If he pleases the people, he'll be facing their own direction and will receive the guidance or help with the lord. So the bishop faces the lord pleading for the people. He doesn't face the people. Arguing with the lord on their behalf. Yeah. And is there a balance to that? Because sometimes I think of some experiences where individuals feel like and the bishop doesn't even see me or the leader doesn't he just like it's always his way or the highway because he feels like he's him and the lord, but I don't even feel seen or heard or so how do you strike that balance? I love the way president hiring says this good inspiration depends on good information. If you really want to look to the lord, we have the people, you better know what's going on with the people. You better know them and love them. Intimately. Yeah. But you're not representing the people of the lord. The lord to the people. Yeah, that's

really helpful. Any thoughts on that, Dan, you want to add? I just think that in the academic setting we talk about leadership transformational leadership is filled with paradoxes with positive tensions. And I think what other Cornish is hitting on is right from the beginning talking about know the people love the people, be in the details like all those things, right? And then this paradox of not necessarily wanting or needing to please them. So you're their servant, not what I'm saying there with that, but the idea that you have to hold both of those. That is not easy, and I don't think that we would represent that you would represent that that's easy. I think that's a continual calibration through prayer and interaction and all of that. I was actually going to talk be what you had hoped commencement in July of 2017. And wrestling to know what I could say to help those young people as they move on to their lives. And I came to two words from John 8, I think it's very 26 or 27. Jesus says that he did those things that the father told him. I see those things as father said. That's a good thing. You know, do what your mom says. But the first law of obedience is the first love heaven is obedience. But it's not the last love heaven. The last life heaven is consecration. So I think it's a rich 29 the series says I do always those things that please him, what the savior did was not just whether it's father told him to do what he knew would also please this heavenly father is the difference between Washington and the weather says you have to. And getting up from the table, watching the news is trying the dishes putting the food away from the floor and going out to play. What is new at your told? What would please your mother? If the bishop does what the father wants him to do to bless the people in ways that please God, he will still have critics, but that's okay, because in the end, your goal is to please the people.

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It's a please God. And if you love the people, but seek to please the lord, the people will be best. The two words are, please God. Yeah, that's really helpful. Going back to the principle of it's not about you. I'm curious with your experience going and doing to so many state conferences and whatnot. Sometimes naturally in our culture, there's these pedestals that we've created unintentionally. Sometimes people, the people surrounding you, you sort of make it about you. Oh, here's elder corners, the general authority. Let's make sure he's comfortable. Dynamics, how do you help other people not make it about you? Does that make sense? Yeah, you do two things. President Kimball said it eloquently. When the people praise you, don't inhale. And the second part is you turn it right back on them. And so the people say, oh, elders is so good to see. It's a wonderful to be with general authority. You say, well, tell me about yourself. Where are you from? What's going on in your life? If they are praising you, they will not go away feeling nourished. If you turn it to them and attend to them and love them and care about them sincerely, they'll feel nourished. Yeah. And it's really helpful. That's how the savior did it. Think of how the same way. When the rich young man said him, good master. He said, why callista me good? There's no good God. The savior immediately turns it back to him. And he doesn't allow him to talk about the savior about how good he is. Excellent example. Yeah. Awesome. Dan, any other questions in general? Or do we cover a lot of us here to take home and think about for sure? Really good. So I've got one more question for you, but I'm just curious now that you're released, what's next for yield or garnish? Well, I'm having a delightful experience. They've allowed me to teach a class at the university of Utah institute. And that's been a blessing to me. And I've learned a lot from it. There obviously some things that I need to do to manage a move

and the marriage and the challenges of big transition in life. It's been an opportunity for me to do some writing and thinking and ways that have been kind of bubbling underneath the surface for years. And it's remarkable how much inspiration and instruction comes from trying to put thoughts into paper. You'll just got taught us a lot about that. And I think I may have an opportunity to serve in a hospital as a Spanish medical translator. Oh, great. I speak fluent medicine in a pretty good Spanish. So there are many service opportunities, of course, one of the ones that I look forward to most and hope to spend a lot of time in is serving as a seat in the temple and we have more opportunities to do that. And the solid temple is well. I'll probably be in the bountiful temporary other temples because although the Salt Lake Templars are attempting it, it's not we will be able to find nearby temple where they can use something. Awesome. Service patrons and workers. Well, this has been so insightful and inspiring for me personally. I know for the audience and I hope even for your posterity someday, they have this recording to go to hear some of these simple but profound leadership principles. So my last question feels or corners is reflecting back on all the various leadership opportunities that you've had leading in such a Christ like manner. How has leading helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ? Because you quickly realize that if you try to do it, if you try to be the focus if you try to generate the ideas, it feels robustly and repeatedly. When you learn that there is no meaningful lasting success, except as the lord guides you. You understand inescapable way. You're completely dependence on the savior. I have a lot of people who are dear Friends and academics. And a lot of people who don't believe the things we believe, they haven't had the experiences that we've had, and I am inclined to say to them, your lack of experience with God does not replace my real and ongoing experiences with God. The lack of evidence is not evidence. But I very real ongoing. Personal and detailed relationship with God through Christ. Is real and effective and undeniable. What I know, I know for sure. I know that in his mercy when I am sufficiently have all receptive he guides me.

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And I know he loves and guides and buses anybody who will let him and I know that for sure. Thanks for listening. Like I said at the beginning of the episode, make sure to visit leading.saints.org to find similar content that will inspire you to be more prepared to lead. Simply text the word lead to four 747 four 7, I will send you a link to make it easy to get started. Also, would you mind sending this episode to another person who would find it insightful? Maybe in a text message or an email, it will definitely bless their life. 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 of which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.