



Giving Your Ward a Story to Tell and Other Ways to Promote Positive Ward Culture | An Interview with Kirk Weisler

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you live, what do you do? That sort of thing. Sure. So I live in Gilbert Arizona. We've lived here about 7 years, moved here from Georgia, we're out there about 9 years. The girl I married, Rebecca, we've been hanging out together for 30 years. Wow. We met both rejected BYU students going to the community college, which from what I understand now is even bigger than BYU. You view. I was one of those rejects that ended up in norm as well. But we were there during the main change. You know, when Carrie Romans worked was there and they were changing from two to four years and then all that. But we have 6 children together. Three boys three girls. I make my living primarily doing coaching training leadership and culture based team building called I call it culture building training. I usually in person training. It's been a little slow this last year and a half for in person training. So I've done something called zip zap zoom, you know, how to build a virtual team, things like that to kind of fill the gap, but being with people is obviously just so much more fun. But we could, I'd be needing me with you in the studio and it would just be so fun. And I listened to you so much. So that's what I've done. That's what I do. And then I think the context that got you and I connected was my recent service as an LDS bishop. I know you do a lot of so much of what you do with benefits leaders as they're trying to work with the different populations and challenges they face. And so I think that's how you and I got connected and through SQL Friends. Yeah. And what do you remember from that as far as starting that experience as bishop? I mean is there a story there as far as how you recalled or what that experience was like because even though you're this guy that goes around coaches and presents about culture and leadership, I just feel like church leadership sometimes can be the great equalizer, right? That just brings everybody to the same ground zero and says, all right, now you give it a shot. What do you remember about that learning experience at the beginning? Yeah. Okay, so at some point, so I'm 57 now, so I was in my early 50s when this happened. And I don't know how old you look very young to me. I turned 40 this year, so. But think about the number of bishops we've been through. Yeah. And I'm assuming you served in LDS mission, I don't know, but if some missionaries, some missionary stay with one mission, president submission had the experience of being with two. And so you see these dynamics in leadership and styles and that kind of thing. And so our ward culture, we just barely moved from Gilbert, just very moved to go to Arizona from Georgia. So we got there during the summer. I mean, we were just unpacking when this happened. And so we didn't have any preconceived notion or experience. Our first couple of Sundays at church, most people were already gone on vacation because in Arizona, people during the summer exit the state. Makes sense. Like a snowbird opposite thing. So I don't have any idea. I looked at my wife and I thought, well, this is interesting. There's a lot of people they could choose from. So we're going to say this came from God. We're going to lean in and have a great experience. And then I had a few people from the state tell me that this particular ward was a little bit of a stepchild to the stake in that there was a little higher turnover, more of a starter homes. There's going to be more needs. That type of scenario. And I said, okay, well, I didn't know what that meant.

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And so but I was like any bishop, I was excited. And like any bishop, well, I think, I don't know what anybody should do with that. I know what I do that. I'm going to be the best. I'm going to break records. My job allows me to go over in the morning. I'm just going to read that hammock a couple times. It's the first couple of weeks. I'm just going to be right and then and then you get on you leave the MTC and you hit the mission. This is how this is going to go. Yeah. Does that sound familiar? Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. I'm going to make the state president so proud, you know? Trust me. I love that. Love that. And then how long did you serve as a bishop? 5 years. 5 years. Nice. So pretty, pretty typical for Arizona, right? I don't know. I think so. There was threats from the state president that my call would be extended and shortened. So there was moments when there was moments when he said, you know, I'd be the bishop, but I never thought you would do that. And we'll talk about that a little bit. But he still loved me and I still love him. Yeah. So let's just go to the basics as far as culture is concerned. You know, through the lens of your experience as a bishop, but also as a speaker and consultant and coach. We hear this term culture a lot. And sometimes it's just it can feel more like a buzzword. I think generally people understand what we're saying about culture. And these phrases that you're religious community. Oh, that's not doctor, and that's culture. And it's really hard to sit down with the concept of culture as a leader and say, okay, now we're going to do a B and C so where do we begin to even understand what culture is or how we can start on this path of implementing a positive culture in a ward? Okay. Have you interviewed the guy that does the website, the art of manliness? Yeah, yeah. Okay, Brett McKay, yes. So yeah, he wrote an article called the father with intentionality. It's my go to short piece that I use with my corporations when I'm doing culture work. Because it's a 7 minute read that gives you a good concept. But I drafted a little something for you today, thinking you might ask this question. So here's what I wrote. Like families, every water branch or stake has its own unique culture. That feeling that's made up of our collective beliefs and attitudes and energy of the members and the stories that they tell themselves and others about themselves and others and about how the ward is and how the bishop is and how the young men's program is. You as a bishop saw people come in, they were kind of surfing your ward. They were like, I can move anywhere in this community. I'm just going to reward hopping looking for that fit, right? Like, that just when they moved to a new city, we go to church by zip code, but that just go to church by preacher. Like, a one looking for the preacher that kind of fits my so while everyone contributed to the culture, leaders can play this key role in shifting and shaping that culture. And they will do this intentionally, as Brett writes, or they'll do it unintentionally, either way, you and I are going to shape that culture. So my question for you Kurt is, have there been times in your church? Think of it. Think about times in nutrients where you visit another ward and experience something about that other ward that you're like, wow, that's that's cool. I mean, or that's remarkable, or man, I wish our board did that, or I'm gonna do that when I'm a bishop's update. Can you think of any specific things that you saw? Just specific thing. I'll give you one. Okay. Yeah. Haven't you? Haven't we all gone to a ward and go, man, these deacons in the sacrament? That's tight. Yeah. They were crisp. That would have taken us 15 more minutes. How'd they do that in 15 minutes, right? Like, wow, those guys, right? Or you go to this ward and there's this buzz. There's just this, I mean, it's not reverent, but there's a good feeling. There's all this buzz, and

then the bishop brick stands and it just goes like, wow, this got quiet. Or going to a singles ward, where there is no children and going, it's too quiet. I'm right. But we go to these wards and we had these experiences and those experiences are part of that world's culture. And sometimes we're like, wow, that's cool, and sometimes we're like, oh, I kind of miss my work. Yeah. But we all belong to the same faith. We all have the same doctrine. So I've imagined I've often imagined this dream calling in the church, which is that whether Kirk wisely, you've been called to serve as a best practice gather your assignment as to visit rewards each Sunday and just gather best practices. I'd love to just go to four three or four words every Sunday and just cherry pick the very best, right? And because we all have the same handbook of instructions, we all have our unique strengths. But I think one of the unique strengths of our leg clergy is that our unique strengths then are interpreted by our worldview, my organization, our meetings, and mingled with revelation, we seek to act out the very best of what we understand from the church handbook and how it works in Iran and what our state presence guidance is to have our ward meeting and our ward organization. I mean, we're all just doing our best, but we're all doing it with our own individual flavor. We're not clones.

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We're very unique children of God. So all that goes into shaping and shipping this culture. So now, here we are at the culture, and everyone is different. But we're highly influenced by what people are willing to say out loud. Right? Isn't that true? Yeah. Right. The number of people that approached you and said, you know, and they weren't ditching the other bishop, they were just they just liked like some of us liked one mission present more than we love both of our mission presence, but we liked one more. There was something about that that just seemed to work with us better. Does that make sense? Yeah, if we had our pick, we would probably pick one over the other. So one of the first things I noticed about our ward was, there was a lot of enthusiasm. There was a lot of young families with a lot of enthusiasm. We've come to this place in the gospel where we've been asked to kind of tone down the number of meetings we had and the kind of pull back a little bit. So families didn't feel so obligated to go do things. Some stakes were discouraging linger longer than any unnecessary event. Well, the vibe I got was these people want to connect. This is a group that wants to connect a not on social media alone. They want to be together. But four words were sharing the building. So only on the years that we met last could we pull off something called a linger longer. Now, there was an open discouragement from our state president to not do a linger longer. But it just felt like we need to do something. So we didn't call it linger longer, because we thought we could skirt that guidance, if you will. And the other thing was making as simple as possible. So we had we had a bread themed linger longer. So we just said, let's bring as much fresh cooked bread as we can. We had three big circle tables of bread. And we had a scripture on each table. There's so many great give us this day our daily bread, the savior was tempted with bread, but imagine not live by bread alone.

So we had a theme for each table. And this was just bread and honey. This was bread and jam. And this was bread and butter. That's all it was. Very simple, very low maintenance, again, because we want to keep things simple. Oh my gosh, this thing was just a blow up hit. Now, it was a blow pit in a couple ways. One, it was easy. There was no setup almost no takedown. People stayed for it, right? And then the ward was so responsive to it. I mean, they just stayed and they stayed and they stayed. As opposed to, okay, well, this obligatory, we got to kind of do a social appearance, but we're out of here, kind of a thing, which we've all experienced. It was just different. And so then, while that was a cool thing that the bishopric did. Oh, okay. Well, just that statement that someone would say that out loud, all of a sudden made us, we hadn't changed, but we were a better bishop. Does that make sense? The story's matter. Stories just shape people's viewpoint. So that would be an example. Another example of what I thought was the lowest hanging fruit in any ward is the elders coram culture. And I don't know how it is today. So I'm dating my go back in time to that elder scorn where we've been there. Okay, so it's tough. Okay, so there's a guy named Randall kempton and Randall, if you listen to this, I hope that you know that you've influenced my life forever. So rental. So we were in Lake steak and warm Utah. Newly married. My wife's 18. She's like, why am I really excited with all these women that are right? She's like, there's no place for an 8 year old newly married in this family ward of. This was not a student award. She was like, okay, but we're faithful. We're going the Eller's core met in the basement of one of these old churches on these metal chairs from 1965. We're down this dingy, right? And haven't we all been to this place? And we're down there. We get a new. I go down there and I'm like, oh, this is awful. Thankfully, I got called to be the young man's president. And I did that for about a year. But then the bishop bishop king called a new eligible president. He called Randall kempton. And now I'm sitting with bishop king and he goes, hey, president. And I love being in one's president because I felt like I wasn't being successful, but I thought I was. I know now that I wasn't, but then I thought, hey, this is easy, so now you've all been there as well. Okay, so he says so president campton is on your own present. I'm like, why are you telling me this? And he goes, and he's been praying and fasting. Oh, okay. Well, I've done that too. And he he submit your name to be one of his counselors. And he said, I know you're thinking, but you're the almonds present, and I just thought I'd give the opportunity to pray about it because I'm not prone to release you, but I wanted you to have an opportunity to seek revelation. And then curb this awful thing happened, right? I knew in that very moment that I was supposed to be this guy's counselor. Now, this is not a negative about, this is not what I'm about to say next is much more reflective of me and where I was at and my immaturity at that time than it is a round counted. But I knew around was. And real company is a very soft spoken. I'm a ranger. I'm an X ranger. I'm an outspoken. We would never go bowling together.

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There's just nothing about us. There's just, I love him as a brother. He loves me, but I'm like, what? What? What? Now, at tennessee had averaged 5 on a good Sunday 7 in a year. Maybe the past 9 years. I don't know how long. Yeah. That first Sunday with rental captain. In that basement, by the way, the other counselor called was a guy that was he was an odd dude. Probably like I was an author to him. And then the secretary was a guy that couldn't have been four and a half feet tall. I mean, we were just a collective of the odd couple times two. It was just, why am I a part of this team? That was my 27. I'm so immature. I'm so sorry. This is true. All this is true. Maybe I'm maybe I'm 29 this time. So it's embarrassing, but this is where I was at mental. I'm just being very candid here. So present Cameron says down. He says, here's what I hope we can do together. He said, I hope we can create a great elbow culture and community. And I'm like, yeah, okay, opening speech, high hopes. He said, here's what I think we'll do. He said if we can just go out one night a week for two hours, if we can all just, can you commit to two hours one night a week? And two hours on Sunday, we'll just go visit people in the corner. Okay. Success was two hours on one night a week and two hours on Sunday. That was success. Now I know I'm doing my calling, which is a great thing in many calling you don't know what if it makes successful. But success was if we went out for two hours and visited people. And then on Sundays, here's what he did. Those 7 guys came in the basement and Randall kempton said, so tell us a little bit about yourself. And everyone introduced himself and he would have two or three questions we would all answer. And every Sunday he did it again. And 6 months later, there was 35 guys in that basement. And by the end of the year, we didn't fit in the basement anymore. And this quiet, beautiful man, impacted the culture of that quorum and made it a quorum. In a way that I had never seen before in my life, never experienced before and create a possibility in my mind about what I knew was possible with an Ellis quorum. And it wasn't some big thing. He just loved them and said, who are you? And so they felt known and they got to know each other and every Sunday he just did it again and again and again and again. And it didn't matter if it was a three minute lesson or 7 minutes left. Randall kempton changed that ward culture and he did it with love and visits. So now, I bring that story that story is now part of my life. I bring that with me to my calling exhibition. And my belief is, if we just get to know each other, a little bit more than this passing brother and sister high Frank among. If we can dig into that a little bit like president kempton did, that we can make a difference. And I thought, man, the low hanging fruit is always in the elders form. Yeah. And so we started there. And I just shared the story of president kempton and suggested it as a model and this beautiful man that was able to come present. He got it. And he got it quick and he got it good and soon that began to not only that. So he felt like the lowest hanging fruit in the corn was moving, because we had about 30% turnover and a 600 person ward and we got a couple of them off. And you're talking about the elders corn president when you were bishop, right? Yeah, okay. So I explained to him my vision and he shared that vision and expanded it. And then as we counseled together, the low hanging fruit was moving. Move ins were the greatest opportunity to gather the corn together. So we decided, let's redefine move ins, they're not about moving stuff. They're about connecting men. And I kid you not, Kurt, and I say this with, I hope humble pride. Our move ins went from 5 and 6 guys, 25, 30 guys. Okay. And it was never about the stuff. It was always about the brotherhood. And just that camaraderie of talking and handing things and setting up chains and just that whole thing, it just and that if you get 5 or 6 guys that are kind of on the fence about whether they're going to commit to the war, or whether they're going to be

engaged or not, and they feel that sense of brotherhood, it's the camaraderie of soldiers almost, right? Yeah. And that becomes a dynamic force for change. And all of a sudden, we're not, no one's moaning about a move in. And I think God gave us a gift in the very beginning. I got a call. Someone had got held up on the highway. And so this guy said, I'm showing up. I was hoping some guys could show up, maybe Monday to help me and I go, when are you showing up in about 40 minutes? So we just took the elders corm and said let's go unload this guy's truck for a priesthood. The family was blown away. So now what is this family saying about the ward? Very positive things. He's like, who's he telling? This unbelievable thing happened. Who's his wife telling? What's her testimony like in really excited present? She just thinks the most incredible thing. So I think here's the fact if your listeners, the principal I would call giving people a story to tell.

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Everyone's going to tell the story about their first interaction with the award. Everyone's going to tell a story. And you're going to influence that story by that impression you make. And that movement became the war council talked about. This is our chance because if we can convert them on the move in, if they start telling the story, that this is the most incredible board they've ever experienced because of their first experience. They're going to forgive 7 experiences that are less than stellar. Because they've already declared their belief that the ward is this. Does that make sense? Beliefs drive behavior. So those are a couple of specific examples of things that we did very intentionally to try to influence and create a more positive culture. Okay. Yeah, that's really helpful. And I love the principle and how did you frame it give people a story to tell people what was the story to tell? Okay, yeah. You and I both know, we interact with anyone, right? They're going to walk away. They're going to tell a story about that interaction. It's going to be, yeah, whatever. Or it's going to be drama. It's going to be a love story. It's going to be a murder mystery. Hopefully not a hard question. But it's going to tell a story. And we, leaders, we can influence that story. By the way, we interact and how we show up. And so I think those things really help set the table for this is going to be different. This bishopric is going to be different. This bishop's going to approach things differently. Moves are different. Our elders form is different. And so people got excited about that because it wasn't just different. It was different in their view. It was different better. Yeah. Because they felt more known and loved. Yeah. So let me ask you that around this principle of giving people a story to tell. How do you go from maybe sitting in a word council meeting and recognizing moves are the low hanging fruit? To 35 people showing up to I mean this is many elders of corn presidents are leaning in right now. What does it look like as far as unpacking that principle and applying it? Okay, now I'm so glad you asked this question because when you're telling a story it just sounds like we went from 5 to 30. That's not what happened. It's like the movie Montage. It's in there. So let me back up. So the rental came to story, if we're going to encourage phase, we're going to unpack it. And thank you so

much. We're going to pack it. So here's rental kempton. Here's his counselors. And so now we, in a secretary, and we kneel and pray on Wednesday night, we have a little 15 minute, 20 minute, and we all have three or four families on our go visit list. And we're not there to save them. We're not there to do anything except say hi. We're not there to reactivate. We're just there to investigate if you will. Hey, hi. Introduce and say, hi, and make connections. Our mission was just get in the door and express love. That was our mission. And so we all went out, whether three or four families. Now, look at what's happening here. President captain gave us a way to feel successful. Whereas a lot of elders come counselors don't feel successful. The president goes to correlation, sends them when they're sick, or they just can't handle another correlation meeting. So I'm as engaged as my president allows me to inform me to be, but now we're all equally engaged in our view and success looks like going out and visiting these three or four families. And now I've magnified my calling. My president is happy with me. I'm actually doing some of my calling it's measurable. It feels good. I'm going with this guy that I don't really know, but I'm starting to fall in love with him because it's odd he is. He likes me back. And I don't understand that, but here we are. And now you knock on the door and nobody answers. But someone at the store opens themselves, something like, hey, I know you and all of a sudden now you're in a door that you didn't plan to be in, but as you walk out that door, you know that God puts you in that door because something you happen in there that you didn't expect that you didn't even plan for, that you're not worthy of, but it did. And it was amazing and this miracle. And you're like, wow, and then you come back as a presidency, like we just had the best experience with davidsons and then the president, Kevin's like, yeah, well, that's great. That's fantastic. What do you think we should do next? And all of a sudden, right? Yeah. But it wasn't. It wasn't planned, but it came because there was a plan. Not because it was space, but because there was action that allowed the faith to move. And so there you are. Now that guy, he felt the excitement too, he's much more likely to come and hang out in the basement. That's not what you win. But even asking me, you didn't ask him about hanging in the basement. You just invited him, hey, we meet in the basement. We're going to be there. We're going to be there. You know, we're going to be there. So that's part of it. So now that's happening and it's happening Wednesday night and maybe of the 8 homes we have identified or 9, whatever it was, maybe we got into two or three doors. If one or two of those decides to come on Sunday, 5 becomes 7. 7 becomes 9, 9 becomes 11, and at that point, now you've got momentum, you've got some of these people that are on the fringe or usually hang with people that are on the fringe. Now they're going on Sunday and staying for the second hour the third hour, that's different. So now they're other people in the now it's increasing. Does that make sense? Now, two at a time becomes four to time. Does that make sense? Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Okay. Second thing that's happening. In the corner itself. So that's what's happening outside of the corner in the corner. Instead of sitting there and going, oh, we ask Kurt Frank to do the lesson.

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And of course, like, oh, yes, right. Oh, no problem, guys. And he's opening his manual like it's a movie. The movie is the spirit. Instead, he's not doing that. He goes, hey, before we dive into the lesson today, let's see who's here. Let's check in with each other. And no matter how long it takes, everyone says their name, what their focus in school, what they do professionally, and some question off the wall question about what's the coolest church experience? Whatever it is, it's something positive and everyone speaks to it. And so we all know a little bit more about each other. So we're growing together. We're learning from each other. We're learning with each other. We're learning about each other. That's culture. And spring and positive context. And then we had the additional benefit of having preached keys in our own present and we've got the holy ghost, which is the magnifier of all good things. So president Kemp is an invited the spirit and he's invited us to love each other and to learn about each other and to learn to love each other. And this begins to increase exponentially. And all of a sudden, I say, all of a sudden, you know, four to 6 months, when you have a very different culture, it's all of a sudden. Yeah, and I love that. It's almost like you added a little structure. It wasn't that this structure was revealed by heaven. By any means it was like, hey, let's go to visits or let's just sit check in with people on Sunday and let's try that out. And then I'm sure there's this regroup and adjustments and then you try it again and you figure out what works and over time you're focused on how can we give people a story to tell. That can just stimulate so much revelation. Yeah. Yeah. Curta didn't seem like rental kempton said, okay, I'm gonna do this little introduction thing until we get 35 people, then we're gonna stop and just go old school. It seemed like he knew the most important thing was that we felt known and loved. And at some point, again, he's just smarter than me. And at some point, he also must have saw that you know what? He could love and know everybody. But one to many is not as powerful as many to each other. And so he was facilitating the thing that he did with us with them. In them and that was the model that I tried to copy and replicate in my journey as a bishop. Let me give you another example. So there was a sister genesis Claire. And her husband would eventually become one of my counselors, but janessa is a dance instructor and she runs a dance studio and she's busy, but it just felt like she should and she's like 6 feet tall. But just felt like she would be a good primary president. And so one night after interviews, you remember the night is a bishop here the last one there. So you're gonna go turn off the light check the building? Yeah. And you're going down the hall. And there's all this laughter coming in the hall and it sounds like there's a bunch of teenage girls having a sleepover in there. And it's domestic Claire and her new counselors, right? Putting together the primary books for all their teachers for the next year. But it looks sounds and feels like a slumber party as these grown women are in there with all the stuff together on the floor with all these little three ring binders and don't know their stuff, and I looked in there. And I thought, look at what she's doing. And it wasn't accidental. She was very intentionally creating a moment. They were having a shared experience. They were all going to go home feeling all this warmth and this love for each other because they weren't putting together books. They were putting together the team. This was the foundation of their culture and three or four months into it. The primary was just this machine. This machine of love. Everyone wanted to be in the primary. Yeah. Everyone wanted to be the primary. Which segues to another thing on my list of things to talk about, but I don't know if you want to transition. Well, I love that example because it would be easy almost to ask those sisters what made your primary work so well. And maybe someone said, well, we'd have these great binders. But it wasn't the binders. It was the process of putting together putting

these binders together. Kurt, everyone of your listeners. Okay, ask this question. Have you ever seen two machines come into your warehouse and you thought, yeah, you knew they were struggling. They weren't getting along or whatever. And then contrast that, have you ever seen a couple missionaries that you just thought these guys are in the zone? Yeah. It's the same thing with the presidency. Most people look at those comparisons. They don't see any connection there. They see four guys that are doing their calling. But when you see a presidency where they love each other, it's a very different thing. Primary teachers, when you see a united primary presidency, these systems aren't just doing their calling, they love each other, generally, and they love their kids. That's a very different thing. And it was that thing that we were after as a bish brick. We were looking for leaders that could create that thing. And we were coaching leaders if they didn't have that natural skill set how to create that thing that because now when you see those two machines come in and you can see they're together, they're the ones you trust with your Friends. They're the ones you trust with your time. They're the ones you trust with everything. And so that was a very important focus for us. Another thing I wanted to pivot back and ask you about is you talk about, as you recall, those bishops saw that you took a pulse of the ward like, these are young energetic families and couples and this is sort of the direction we need to go in.

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And is there anything as far as like was there any process there to just simple observation of your ward and what you saw or did those things come out of? I think it was counsel or whatnot. How did that come about? It's not just being naive. My wife says I probably air on being too quick to believe in people. I just want to see strengths and goodness. And she's worried sometimes that I don't see, hey, there's a problem. And I go, well, no, I see that. I just don't want to give it any focus. There's some balance there that I am always working on. But having a high belief in people and their potential is, I mean, we're all broken, right? So yeah, so what? Yeah, so what they can't do this or they've got that. What can they do? And what are they willing to do? What has no one ever asked them to do? They would say yes to if someone believed in them enough to ask those by thinking it was kind of there. So I don't know there was a process I went through. There was no formal evaluation. I didn't know an assessment when I just thought these are phenomenal. I was just a naive young bishop going. They're fantastic. This is going to be a great war. That makes sense. No more depth than that. Cool. All right, what's the had another story come to mind that you're transitioning to? I was thinking about callings. And I think there's been a lot of evolutions right, but I think there's been a lot of growth there's been a lot of growth in the church in this area. I think there was a time when the bishopric send you a calling. If you said no to the bishop, you were saying no to God. And so all of this guilt and shame, and then there's members that had pride. I've never turned down a calling. And there's virtue in all that, but I just think, I wish somebody would ask me, hey, Kurt, do you have a dream calling? If

so, what would it be? And I'm really kind of influenced by the Malcolm Gladwell. You know, the strengths finder books, all that stuff that we've done. We see all these personality sessions but now they talk about, hey, folks on your strengths. The weaknesses you're always going to have with you like the poor. It's always going to be with you, right? But what are people's strengths? What are their gifts? And if I knew my gifts and a bishop is supposed to know the gifts in the world, if I knew my gifts, and I could put those gifts where they could swing for the fence, where would that be? And what would your dream calling be became a question that we ask as a bishopric? Hey, listen, we're a big word. We have a lot of turnover. So there's a good chance here that you can have your dream calling. If you could have your dream calling, now here's the cool thing about this question. Most likely they've never been asked any form of it in this scenario. So it's already what, as opposed to them bracing for, I hope I don't get called to be anniversary again. This is a totally different paradigm for most people. So if you could have your dream home, what would it be? And they would say, well, I'd really like or I've always felt about calling the past things like that, but if you could, we're not here to dish out calling because we were desperate for someone. And the church of today, in our word, you're going to be lucky if you get a calling was our context because we just have too many people that are too active. We still have enough to go around. But if we put you in the queue and something comes available, what would you like? Does that make sense? Yeah. It was supposed to be desperate. And I understand some branches and stuff. They're like, we just need someone with a pulse. So I get that. But I'm just telling you the context we were at. That question, the changing of that question, and the answers that we got. And what we're able to do with that, I thought was a gift to everyone in the ward and the word itself. I just thought. Yeah. Because then people felt like, not this is a request line and not that we're not discounting revelation. We should seek that. I'm not saying that. I'm just saying that there's a place there for us to have this discussion and be blessed by it. And I think just that the exercise of asking that question is, you learn when you learn a lot about them and it can stimulate deeper revelation just like PRES hiring says information leads to inspiration. And with that information, you're looking for Sunday school teacher. Suddenly, your mind goes to, hey, I remember brother Smith said that he really enjoys teaching. Let's put that in the circle of revelation and we'll see where that leads us, right? Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah. What's next, as far as we've talked about, giving people a story to tell, and callings and whatnot. What else can we talk about as far as stimulating positive culture and award? I think that did this happen to you. So the first week you're the bishop, the first two weeks. There was the valiant confessors, right? They've been working with bishops for their whole church, right? And they genuinely want you to know. And this is my regular sin. This is my. And they're kind of hoping you might be the bishop that can give them that thing to get them past that masturbation issue or that pornography, whatever it might be.

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But they've been struggling this ball on chain for years. And so they're right there. Maybe on you on your first Sunday. They want to meet with you right away. This is their deal. You know what I'm talking about? Yeah, absolutely. And you immediately fall in love with them. And part of you, the main part of me wants to go, I want to be that bishop that helps you slay this dragon. I really do. And that's probably a little bit of a naming as a memory that I want to be a hero or something. But as you learn to listen, there's a lot of things you can read context that doesn't have to be this magic solution, this magic talk. And we can get away from some of the prescriptions. I remember growing up some of the prescriptions were okay, well, don't take the sacrament for this many weeks. Read three general conference talks. You know, just whatever these magic prescriptions were and just really listen to people and begin to feel where they're coming from and sometimes if you can just eliminate some of the shame and here's an example. I'm talking to this rather about something and there was a there was a mistake. There was a mess up and man it was just this thing and the way the world and all the years and I said, hold on a second. I felt like the spirit kind of helped me with this in a big way. I said, so we're talking about three to 5 minutes here. Tell me about the rest of the week. Tell me about the previous weeks. And that kind of led to this idea that you and I are not our worst three minutes of the day. We're not our worst four hours of the week. Who are you most of the time? Can we talk about that for a second? Because you're a pretty good guy. And that changes the discussion a little bit. Now we can still work on this, but it's not everything. It's just this one little thing, because most of the time, most of the time, you show up, most of the time and you're tender with people and your wife and your mother that's who you are. And then you got this thing. You got a little bit of leprosy, but most of the time, right? You're a touchable lovable son of God has all those capacity and potentially and goodness and the way that you serve in the way that you lived in the way that you don't let this three or four minutes stop you from seeing the rest or stop everyone else from seeing the rest because you withdraw. And just changing that dialog, one of the phrases we introduced was that we're all broken. You know, the givens I like their word better that we're all wounded are awful woundedness. But it can read context as something from judgment to compassion. While broken are all, right? We also differently. And then changing that discussion was a big part. Sometimes we would have this thing where we'd start the sacrament saying, if we could imagine, before we take the sacrament today, we'd have this little two minute message. And it would just be an imitation to take a breath because we're all kind of crushed in there. We're all some of us are still crawling our kids or walking in whatever. We're just instead of just we don't do the program and just jumping at him. I would stand and say something like so glad you're here. You know, before we play our him and sing this song of praise, which is supposed to be a prayer Nagant, can we just context why we're here again? Can we just all take a deep breath and exhale? And what we actually, can we leave behind all our anxieties and all of our insecurities? And all of our brokenness and just say, wait a minute. We have a chance here to have a moment with Christ and begin again. And to really believe that promise like our lives depended on it, because our peace certainly does. And just taking that moment. I mean, that's less than 90 seconds. Inviting people to exhale and just try to be as present as they can for the sacrament can help people shift and so I think one of the big things that helped us help on our journey of intentionally shifting culture was just shifting some of the traditions and the rituals that are there are beautiful part about culture, but they're not our doctrine. Our doctrines in Mormon 6 are run at 6 where it says, hey, and their readings were

conducted after the manner of the workings of the spirit. They were led to pray or to exhort or to teach, or to sound right. But we have a program that we follow. And we should. We need guidance because we're all in the state of apostasy, right? We're all falling away all the time. So we need that. But the spirit will help us help more people if we'll give it more space. And that doesn't mean more time, it just means don't be afraid to stand up there for a minute and just invite everyone to take a breath. Yeah. And be present. Let's not get through the sacrament. Let's get something from it. And if we can do that, then this Sunday was a win. Yeah. This Sunday was a win. You know, we all need a win. I'm picking up on a theme here about related to culture that hadn't considered before. I'm learning from these experiences that you're sharing is that naturally culture, whether it's negative or positive culture, has this momentum about it. It's always wanting to speed up and if it's negative culture, well that'll speed up, right? And you talk about that momentum that it started to speed up, it got some momentum. And so in order to grab the reins of culture, we have to almost create that space and slow everything down in a moment.

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And so that's what president kempton did. He saw that elder's corpsman said, let's just slow down a minute and say, hey, tell me about you. What do you think? And then you talk about the sacrament. We show up to church and there's this tradition. We know what's coming, and it speeds up speeds up also in the two hours over and we go home. But as the leader you step and said, no, we're going to slow down a minute. We're going to create space for just take a breath. Perspective and to take a breath. And then that allowed just that community to grab ahold of the reins of culture and say, okay, here we go. What stories, you know, what stories can we give people about this community? And it's all in that slowing down and giving time to grab the reins of the future. I love how you said that, yeah. Making some space making some time. Yeah. I think occasionally, we're really lucky and we have a general authority or to visit our stake or our region, and they might share something, but oftentimes in those leadership circles, they're just, hey, there's this very conversational thing. And they're not trying to get through 6 points. They're not. They're finding a topic or a place where there's a need and then they spend as much time there as is needful. And they're not in a hurry to your point. They write slow as fast. Because now if this sinks in, where 6 things fly over, if this one sinks in, that's a win. If we all go home from sacrament today, having felt the peace and presence of Christ, that's a win. Yeah. If we all go home kind of flurried and going, oh, well, gotta survive that. Well, that's less of a win. You showed up and you were obedient, but we want to have an experience that so we would say imagine a Sunday where you didn't have any imagine if we could have no insecurities. If no one here was thinking about what anyone else was thinking about them, because they're probably not anyway. Imagine no one's thinking about that. No one's none of you are worried about your parents. None of you are worried about that you drank something

last night or viewed something yesterday. No one's we're just here to have an experience with the savages Christ. And we have a promise that we can. And we might think, yeah, but I did this. So he was not going to talk to me. But if we could lay aside even that thinking because this Christ loves us so much. He didn't turn away this woman who was caught in the very act. And she didn't even choose to be there. She was thrown there. He had time for her. He showed up for her. So even in all your brokenness, here you are, right? Here you are. So if we just lay all that aside and just have this moment 'cause this might be our moment this week, I promise your name of Jesus Christ, we can have this moment. Not because I said so because he did. Yeah. He did, right? And so boom, Matt right there, just changes people's frame of mind. Bytes and openness and now they're like, wow. And if they have that moment, and they go home, they're going to tell someone about that moment. And when they tell that moment when they recreate that moment and relive that moment, it reinforces the moment, reminds them they had the moment and makes the moment more possible and plausible and predictable for the future moments. They come expecting and hoping for another moment. And you really want so much there with that. Yeah, it's really, it really is in those moments of their craving, right? And then in those moments, that's where they find Jesus Christ and his gospel and the change happens there. Yeah. Brushing up against we want to embrace it but sometimes we just brush up against it. So you have a story here about nerf guns. I don't know a good segue into this story, but it involves nerf guns. I want to hear it. Okay. Well, I remember that I remember that first that first week or two is a bishop. The men and the young men that would come in and talk about their early exposure to pornography and their struggles with associated sands and all the shame and all that around that. And just going, okay, I just got to change our whole this is not what I want. I want to help, but I want to break this pattern. And so how can we do that? And I can't I'm just one guy. I can't do it. But the pattern of shame that we all have that's associated with all this, which is not serving anybody, how do we break that? And that wasn't quite sure, but I knew that we had to do something differently. So the more men that we get involved helping more boys, I thought that would be good. And all the boys were struggling with it or they were all facing it had faced it. We're facing it, whatever. So remember the prayer rock thing that we all have prior rock, put The Rock on your pillow at night, put it on. So when you kick it in the morning, remind you to nail that. Remember that pray rock thing. We did something with that, but we gave everyone a coin. And this probably came from my military background, the rangers, special forces. We always had coins. Military units have a special coin. So we had an armor of God coin. And we didn't give it to the youth. We gave it to the men to give to a youth. In the context of being a mentor and looking out for that young man and helping him and having a discussion with him about what the armor got meant. And then asking him how he had armored up the week before. So by giving the coin to the men, in other words it would be cool as a bishop if I gave everybody a coin, but it even cooler if every man gave every boy a coin.

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Does that make sense? Yeah. Father to son, that kind of thing. And so we had a meeting with the men to talk about this and to talk about how we wanted to deal with the reality of this thing. There was a part of our lives from our early exposure to our current struggles to having conquered it to our dad being excommunicated because all the different contexts. How do we want to deal with it as a quorum and a body of men? We had a discussion about that. And it was a very unique and powerful discussion. And it wasn't about whether we had it or not. It was about how do we continue to grow and move forward in the gospel because if shame is stopping us from feeling accepted, that's not going to help us on our journey. So it was really a discussion about how do we remove the shame and shine the light or Christ can be in this. And then we took that to the boys and then I really want these guys to have the idea that they were important to keeping our voice safe. They were valuable. So I had this idea of the fiber darts. And it led to some unique outcomes that I didn't expect a plan for. So we had all the priesthood there in the gym and we had the boys circle up. And I was just telling all the men, these boys are saying exactly boys, the thyroid darts are and so now I got a couple elder scoring guys with some nerf guns, popping these kids with darts. And I said, these boys are getting hit. What can we do? And what I wanted to do is I wanted to kind of illustrate that for a minute, then I wanted to have a few of the men stand up. I wanted to have the young men's leaders surround the boys. I wanted to have home teachers around the boys. That's what I wanted to happen. That was my vision. Because I come from experience education. So I thought this was a good metaphor. I can work with this. This is going to have some legs. But we had a couple non member guests there that day. And this was not missionary mindedness. This was probably weird to them. I didn't know what it was, but I'd already planned it and it was a big deal to kind of get everyone there that Sunday. So I just went with it. And these two men, these two older men jumped up instead between the darts and the voice. These two non members, none of the elders, none of the high priest did, because that's what we had the time, right? These two guys stopped shooting these boys and then they were joined and then pretty soon there was a double circle of men around these boys. It was a beautiful, beautiful thing. Beautiful thing. Both of those men would end up taking discussions and getting baptized, but that's not the point of the story, but I was just transformational though. There was a trend. But it was a transformational moment for some of our men, too, because I really wanted here. Yeah, I need to help protect our young man. What does that look like? I'm a home teacher that might have four boys didn't have dads in the home anyway, right? And so what does that look like? What does it feel like? And how real is that? And so I'm just trying to make it more real. That was the point of the exercise. But what I found was the story of what we did was bigger than what we did. Because it was different because it created discussion and discovery and invited the spirit and invited some thoughtfulness and some consideration. And that was the power of it. The story was bigger than the activity. Yeah, that's an interesting concept. Around this principle of giving people a story to tell that often that's the power of the story that in their memory in hindsight it seems like a larger experience than it really was. And I think if sometimes in the next life, I sort of fantasize about going back to the Gettysburg address or the seeing George Washington in action. And it's probably going to be like, this seems like just another Wednesday. Because in those moments, in the exact moment, it's probably smaller than it really grows to be. In a good way. Yeah. No. I think you're absolutely right. And I think that's true of so many things, but because we glamorize things, we exaggerate might be have a negative connotation. I don't

mean it to it. We can really call attention to the highlights. You know, as we remember the story, we really highlight the virtues and highlighting the Joseph Smith. There's 6 different versions of the first vision. And he didn't fudge any of them. He was just telling them to different groups in different contexts. And as I consider this, as I look back on these stories, because I haven't told that story in years now, no one asked me, hey, tell me about the very start and preparing to interview with you. I wrote down some things that we might talk about. Other than that, when have I shared that story? Yeah. And that's really the power of all this is, you don't have to make it huge or this dramatic, like you talk about it. You go walk into these positions thinking I'm going to change the world single handedly through this position. And we put a lot of pressure on ourselves when in reality, the lord does the work on the other side of making these more impactful than maybe they look to us on that exact moment. But we just continue to stimulate these stories. I think about a good brother that came in and see me. And I got to tell you, I loved this man from the moment I laid eyes on him.

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I loved him. And he came in and he knew that I loved him. And I told him I said, I got a man crush on you. And I'm going to try really hard not to say his name. And he loved me back. And I didn't know his history. I didn't know anything about this guy. But he'd been he'd recently married his first marriage in his 30s in her second marriage and we just loved him. And he came in and he had a history with photography and masturbation and had had a setback, you know, and he said, you know, I've been talking to vicious my whole life and he said, it's part of why for a decade, I didn't even do anything with the church. He said, I just got so tired of it. And he said, now here I am with my new bishop, and I know you love me and have to come in here and talk about this and my heart would just ain't. 8 I thought about he said I would rather be dead and have to talk to one more bishop about one more episode of this. And I didn't know what to do, Kurt. Because I was so you know, I wanted to do something. I felt compelled to do something and I didn't know, you know, there was no magic bullet here. Read this. The impression I had was to engage more priesthood keys. And so I called on, I was going to president, and I said, here's the scenario. And I asked his brother way to be okay. And he goes, at this point, basically, I would do anything. He said, because I can't do this anymore. I'd rather not live than do this again. It's just that horrifying to me. So with his permission, the elder culinary present and I had a talk. And this was the revelation that we had to do a 30 day fast. And involve the quorum. And so each member of the elders quorum or the Elizabeth was asked if they would fast, they would fast. Diligently, one day during the course of a 30 day window for our brother and their quorum who was trying to overcome hard things. And everyone kind of knew what that was. If you went without speaking to it. And this quorum signed up quick. We created another phone number so that each day they could text this brother and say I'm fasting for you and I hope things are going well. Help us comprehend set this up. So there was this beautiful anonymity and every day this

brother got a text from a brother in the corn. Saying hampering for you, fasting for you. I don't know if we could even have a discussion about how unifying this was for this form. At the end of 30 days, this brother said, bishop. I would like everyone who's comfortable was willing. Who faster me I'd like them to come. I want to tell them what I've experienced this month. I don't care. I'm not ashamed anymore. I was okay, my wife wants to be there too. And now, most of these 30 men are now in the primary room on a weeknight. In an empty church building. And he described to these men in this beautiful, vulnerable you know, I think the closest you might get to this is in some of our addiction recovery classes when there's that open, beautiful. It was there. It was so rich and everyone was just, it was this moment. This outpouring of just love and the spirit. And he Boris testimony and his wife were her testimony, and there was shame can not be found within a 5 mile radius of this building. There was just love. And the savior and the atonement and grace and grace and grace upon grace and hugs and love and the quorum we can't even begin to talk about what this might do for a corn of men who were united in such a sacred purpose. To help a brother. Yeah. Wow. Right? Yeah. I look at that and I go, there's a lot of priest keys in a ward. I mean, maybe not a lot, but for whatever there are, I've got to think is a bishop about how can I unite them more frequently? Yeah. Because there's power these keys, but if I never put them in the car, I just need to think about that more. Adding before then thought about it in that way. Yeah. Yeah, uniting the keys. Sometimes they're sort of in their own their own corners of the war doing their thing. But to unite them and really intentional waste can be impactful, obviously. I'm talking way above my pay grade, but there it is. That was my final. Yeah. Well, like I said, I go one more question for you, but if anybody wants to reach out to you or learn more about what you do with speaking and whatnot, does it have a website or place that you'd send them? Yeah, just my first name. Kirk weisler. Just Kirk wisely. No, why is there dot com? I'm sorry. Okay. And we'll link to it in the show notes for sure. Last question, I have for you Kirk is, as you reflect on your time as bishop, those 5 years, being a leader serving as a leader, doing your best as a leader. How has being a leader helped you become a better follower of Jesus Christ? Everything about being a leader in the context of discipleship were being a bishop is absolutely not having a clue.

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So here you are thinking I think that's what I think is what I think. And even what counsel is about to start and you've kind of got here's what I think I'm going to and then what counsel is coming on and you look down and you're like, I didn't speak to any of that. Not only that, I didn't even think about it. I had a very real stupor of thought. That's how off I was. That's how much I need. That's how broken I am. So I think being a leader is living this place of, oh my gosh, I can't. This is so much bigger than me. This ward is bigger than me. What they need is bigger than the only Christ knows what they need. And only in my lamest best attempts at connecting with him and letting him direct my thoughts my actions and my deeds. Is this going to be

anywhere close to what it needs to be? Because it's not about me. And just trying to stat at my own way. And thankfully, that's why you have counselors, right? Counselors because you talk about this. I know me. Here's my weaknesses and I got plenty. Let me just share them with you. So when you see my ego and my name and my nars, whatever it is, you start to take, hey, this is where you and I know at each other and say, hey, bishop. Got a second? And if we really do that, then we can make a way to pass for the spirit to be the leader, and then we'll do our best to follow. And remember to get additional leadership content through the core leader library. Click the donate button at leading saints dot org or text the word lead to four 747 four 7. 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 nor run away. And of which we must face up with boldness and courage and ability.